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WORKING PAPERS

HISTORIANS / ARTIFACTS / LEARNERS

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THE FOREWARD
page 1

□

STAFF & CONTRIBUTORS
page 3

□

TEACHING AMERICAN HISTORY
WITH AMERICAN THINGS: FIVE PASTMASTERS
page 7

□

THE COLLOQUIUM
page 17

□

ROADS IN WONDERLAND
page 21

□

HALF SUNK IN THE SAND:
SOME THOUGHTS FROM UNDERGROUND ON
ARTIFACTS, HISTORICAL ARCHAEOLOGY & TEACHING
page 29

□

THE HISTORY OF TECHNOLOGY & MATERIAL CULTURE
page 43

□

INTERPRETING THE LIE OF THE LAND:
AN UPHILL EFFORT
page 53

□

SOCIAL HISTORIANS / ARTIFACTS / MUSEUM EDUCATORS
page 61

□

THE FOLKLIFE FLAVOR OF HISTORY:
A SAMPLE OF THREE OPINIONS
page 67

□

THE TRANSCRIPT:
REMARKS & DISCUSSION
page 77

□

THE RECOMMENDATIONS
page 103

□

THE COURSE FILE:
SYLLABI & BIBLIOGRAPHY
page 107

■

The Foreward

Just a decade ago, a small group of people set out to study teaching and learning in art museums and, in due course, produced The Art Museum as Educator. It was an absorbing, time-consuming and expensive project, justified in the minds of its authors by its ultimate ability to symbolize-- in art museum settings-- the universe of issues about teaching and learning from objects. Such a premise was not unreasonable since some of the research for the project was done in non-art museum settings, and since professional communication about the issues was then in its infancy. The dimensions by which museum educators have outgrown that premise can,in fact, be better understood because the study has become a measuring device: we know where we are now because we know where we were then. The ten years since have seen a virtual explosion of seekers-- curators, scholars, academicians, and school teachers, as well as museum educators-- for sources, resources and allies in the use of artifacts as primary sources for teaching.

The notion that perhaps the efforts of that cadre of professionals should be documented, encouraged and shared was sparked by Thomas J. Schlereth, a professor of history at the University of Notre Dame. In a March 1980 address to an audience of museum professionals and museum education students at the George Washington University, Washington, D.C., he called for an expanded version of a sourcebook that I had edited for the Center for Museum Education in 1978; the sourcebook shared information about education programs at two dozen historic sites and houses.

Barbara C. Fertig, who had written selections for The Art Museum as Educator, met with Schlereth and me to discuss our mutual interests in sharing professional resources. In particular, we were concerned with furthering the work of people for whom the artifact is a primary source for teaching history. Out of our conversations and talks with other colleagues blossomed a proposal to collect and document clearly articulated theories and methodologies about teaching history from material culture evidence. We three hoped to locate and report on programs and practices in schools and museums that logically evolved from those methodologies. As our primary concern clearly placed artifacts as the central focus of the historians and learners, we titled our effort "Historians/ Artifacts/ Learners: The History Museum as Teacher," nicknaming it HAL.

One of our tools for gathering that information was a two-day colloquium. That effort provided also an opportunity to explore the interdisciplinary nature of the thesis. This publication is another, more tangible effort to share with a wider public the collected information, which ranged from bibliographies, syllabi and commissioned papers to conversations with colleagues and recommendations of places to visit. Journal articles will provide another means of dissemination.

Historians/ Artifacts/ Learners: The Working Papers reflects our work thus far. We hope that it will answer some questions-- and raise others. We hope that readers with an inclination to use artifacts in their teaching will find some guidelines for practice. And, for those readers who already endorse that teaching philosophy, we hope they will consider their own methodologies or applications in light of the spectrum of alternatives presented here. HAL: The Working Papers is only a beginning-- for its readers, for the documentation and celebration of the state of the art, and for the expansion of the practice of teaching history with material culture.

Participation by Tom Schlereth and Barbara Fertig, HAL's consultants, assured a conscientious effort to touch all bases and produce a thought-provoking and useful report. They and I are grateful to the National Endowment for the Humanities, Division of Public Programs, for its support of this planning project.

Susan K. Nichols
Project Director

Staff & Contributors

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8

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Teaching American History with American Things: Five Pastmasters

THOMAS J. SCHLERETH

The American historian Carl Becker once defined history simply as "that memory of things said and things done in the past." Within the formal history establishment, the work of most historians has been primarily based on "things said," especially as manifested in literary sources like newspapers, congressional debates, and presidential edicts. Even when depicting history as the past of "things done," the typical perspective has usually been derived from verbal evidence such as treaties, governmental legislation, or court decisions. Words and deeds appear to be the hallmarks of the historian's craft. On first glance, there appears to have been very little attention paid simply to "things," physical objects such as food, clothing or shelter as evidence in historical research and teaching.

The six historiographical essays that follow, however, provide proof that such a state of affairs is changing among many historians who now teach in schools, museums, and other public agencies. As will be evident from these appraisals of the current art of history teaching via artifacts or material culture, there is a considerable amount of fascinating work going on from the disciplinary perspectives of historical archaeology, social history, cultural and historical geography, history of technology, art and decorative arts history, cultural anthropology, and folklife studies. Teachers in these fields recognize that American things deserve a place in American history interpretation; that without the use of material culture, historical awareness and understanding can be incomplete, distorted or quite wrong.

Has this perception always been so? Is there a history of material culture history? Or, perhaps more germane to the focus of this volume, is there a history of the teaching of history with material culture? To all of these questions, the answer is both yes and no. Contemporary interest in various ways of teaching history using artifactual data does seem quite widespread-- to wit, the very existence of the HAL colloquium at Colonial Williamsburg in 1981. Yet many scattered examples also exist of past history instruction employing American artifacts. Elsewhere I have delineated a brief sketch of what I consider to be the major configurations of the material culture studies movement's historical development in America over the last century.[1] In these remarks, therefore, I would like to propose another interpretive outline, one concentrating on a sample of exemplary teachers who, over the past decades, have used material culture in their doing of American history.

In my brief survey, I have deliberately highlighted individuals rather than institutions because I believe that most good teaching is a personal art form. Behind the obvious and impressive contributions to the field of material culture teaching, at a place such as the Smithsonian Institution, lie the achievements of individuals such as a Spencer Baird or a Malcolm Watkins. In limiting the selection to but a few representative types, I recognize that I have neglected many others. For the moment, my heuristic handful of past history teachers who have recognized the value of artifactual evidence will have to stand as symbolic figures for the many other similarly motivated individuals who have worked, unknown and unappreciated, in schools, museums, historical societies and agencies.

CHARLES WILLSON PEALE: EXHIBITS AS HISTORICAL EXPLANATIONS

The American interest in material culture originated in the assorted borderlands and hinterlands of the early nineteenth century's expanding universe of knowledge. The first people to realize its didactic potential were an eclectic melange of museum founders, curators and benefactors, as well as early antique collectors, historic preservationists, antiquarians, and local history enthusiasts. Charles Willson Peale, the founder of perhaps the first great collection of material culture in America and one of the nation's earliest museums, personified many of the interests of these amateur dilettanti. An avid collector of every type of object--Indian artifacts, wax effigies of all the human species, the Great Mastadon exhumed from upstate New York-- Peale's particular insight into history teaching with objects came from his pioneering work as a museum exhibitor and designer.

Peale recognized two important, if somewhat contradictory, functions of artifacts in history teaching. First, he made use of material culture in order to promote visual and tactile responses to the past. To see, to touch a fragment of the past firsthand, to have direct sensory experience of surviving historical activity assuredly remains one of the obvious pedagogical strategies to which we all turn when using material culture data. On a most basic level, this affective mode of knowing prompts intellectual curiosity and creative wonder; on another level, the technique often affords us an opportunity to measure our own cultural perspective (assuredly a goal of history teaching) in time and place. For, as Jules Prown has suggested, by undertaking cultural interpretation through artifacts, we can engage another culture in the first instance not with our minds, the seat of many of our cultural biases, but with our senses. "This affective mode of apprehension," writes Prown, that allows "us to put ourselves, figuratively speaking, inside the skins of individuals who commissioned, made, used, or enjoyed these objects, to see with their eyes and touch with their hands, to identify with them emphatically, is clearly a different way of engaging the past than abstractly through the written word. Instead of our minds making intellectual contact with minds of the past, our senses make affective contact with the senses of the past."[2]

From what we know of his exhibits at The Peale Museum (1786-1827) in Philadelphia and from his writings, Peale had a sense of this use of the past. He, with a sophistication practically unknown among his peers, also recognized that a history museum's total exhibition environment itself was one of its more vital teaching tools. He was aware that objects collected unsystematically or without any particular intellectual framework would provide little insight into the past. Instead Peale realized that the raw data in the historical collections could not be properly understood or effectively used unless it was organized in such a way that one object could be seen in the context of others, and in conjunction with additional information. As Harold Skramstad and Charles Sellers have pointed out, he recognized that perhaps the highest interpretive level of an historical exhibition of past material culture is its visual storage and arrangement.[3] In short, museum exhibits are historical publications and the exhibiting process is a highly creative activity just like writing a history text.

Finally, ardent democrat that he was, Peale saw historical museums as history books for the general populace. Part of his legacy to modern historians working with artifacts is the continuing process by which historical materials are brought together, classified, organized, displayed, arranged and re-arranged in the mode of communicating history commonly known as public interpretive exhibits.

CHARLES P. WILCOMB: TAKING OBJECTS TO THE SCHOOLS

Assuredly one of Peale's late nineteenth-century heirs was Charles P. Wilcomb, a New England collector-scholar transplanted to the west coast and the founding curator of the Golden Gate Park Museum and the Oakland Public Museum. During an all-too-brief professional life of some twenty years (1895-1915), Wilcomb personified several of the traits of an emerging cadre of professional scholars taken with the explanatory potential of material culture. As a self-taught ethnographer of California's Indian civilizations and as a decorative arts historian of his native New England's colonial past, Wilcomb's two research interests represent the first two American academic disciplines (cultural anthropology and art history) to take artifacts seriously and to embrace them as vital to teaching their subject matter. For example, Wilcomb participated in archaeological excavations on the shore of San Francisco Bay, consulted with visiting ethnologists, and formed a working relationship with the famed University of California anthropologist A.L. Kroeber. By 1899 he had developed a study collection of North American ethnology displaying over 400 basketry specimens.

Wilcomb's work in colonial art history led to the development in 1896 of what some museum historians consider the first "period room" setting in the United States. Not satisfied with the traditional "cabinet of curiosities" or the typical narrow corridor of glass cases for the exhibition and interpretation of the colonial objects he had collected, Wilcomb sought to install them "in a room of sufficient capacity, finished in the Colonial style" in such a way so that the collection would form a most impressive and instructive exhibit. "Our Colonial Department," boasted Wilcomb, "will be the most complete and, from an educational standpoint, the most valuable in the United States."[4]

History education at all levels remained an avowed objective of Wilcomb's extensive school program. In the initial five years of his museum's operation, over 19,000 schoolchildren came for formal lectures. Museum lecturers visited another 16,000 in their classrooms. Frequent loans of duplicate material culture were made in a variety of public outreach programs to schools and other agencies, while special exhibits were mounted at the city's Free Library and its branches. When the numbers grew too large for the exhibition galleries, Wilcomb added a 150-seat hall with lanternslide projection facilities. Recognizing the symbiotic relationship between material culture evidence and documentary sources in history teaching (and learning) with artifacts, he fastened a copy of Alice Morse Earle's then recently published book, Home Life in Colonial Days, to a small reading table in the colonial galleries. Reference materials were to be available in all exhibition spaces, in addition to being found in an adjacent museum library. In short, Wilcomb established several of the teaching techniques and curriculum practices now traditional to many contemporary departments of education in American historical museums as well as in university museum studies programs.

Although he began as an antiquarian, Charles Wilcomb matured into a perceptive cultural historian with a wide vision of the American past. As Melinda Young Frye suggests, he grew quickly to regard material culture "primarily as a means of education." In an annual report prepared midway during his years at the Golden Gate Park Museum, he delivered a statement that might serve as summary of his teaching credo: "The test applied to each (object) when its admission to the museum was contemplated has been: Is it interesting? Does it move thought and appeal to the higher reaches of the imagination, or, in a word, is it educational?"[5]

JOHN DEWEY: THEORIST OF EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING

With a few exceptions such as Bronson Alcott's Temple School or Frederick Froebel's Kindergarten at the 1876 Philadelphia Centennial, the nineteenth-century American educational establishment used few objects in history teaching. Words dominated the history curriculum. Reading, writing and recitations preoccupied the student's learning experiences.

Moreover, the American history subjects taught in most nineteenth-century schools, grammar to graduate, dealt almost solely with politics, war and diplomacy. No significant attention was paid,in history texts, to the role of art, architecture, technology, costume, or any of the components of what we now call cultural history. American education saw little heuristic value in American things. Nothing important, it was thought, could be learned from such commonplace data.

John Dewey, epistemologist and educator, strongly disagreed. Distressed by a kind of intellectual snobbery deeply rooted in Western culture which defines that which is physical as inferior to that which is abstract, Dewey sought to redress the imbalance in the distinctions we tend to make between the material and the theoretical, between doing and thinking, between the concrete and the abstract, between words and things. Hence his early twentieth-century educational philosophy, often labelled "progressive education," stands as an important benchmark in the development of teaching history with artifacts. The inquiry approach that Dewey pioneered while teaching at the Laboratory Schools at the University of Chicago and at the Teachers College of Columbia University considered every artifact-- a student's textbook, school room, home, museum, community-- as a learning environment. As Peale and Wilcomb were innovative practitioners of material culture history teaching, Dewey deserves to be seen as one of the approach's most provocative early theorists.

Dewey's many contributions to the theory and practice of history education have yet to be fully explored, but at least three merit brief mention here. One is epistemological, another curricular, and the third might be classified as administrative.

Undoubtedly Dewey's greatest theoretical contribution to material culture studies was his championing of the inquiry method in approaching historical evidence whether it was verbal or visual. In How We Think (1933), Dewey outlined the steps that should prompt progressive and systematic inquiry on the part of the learner. This inquiry method, as summarized by Peter Martorella,[6] confronts the learner with new or primary data in order to promote thinking about what he or she already knows as well as to nurture the discovery of brand new ideas and insights. Conclusions or hypotheses about the past resulted, Dewey argued, from interaction with actual data (not abstractions), the problems posed by such data, and the task of finding the most plausible explanations for such problems occasioned by the data. Dewey found that having students confront objects (e.g. pottery, maps, paintings) often stimulated this learning pattern far quicker than rote memorization or historical chronologies. His laboratory school projects therefore included such activities as the re-creation of historical foodways, the manufacture of simple tools, and even the building of various forms of shelter.

Such a hands-on approach to learning naturally widened the subject matter of the schools. In fact, Dewey's model curriculum, in addition to being both multidisciplinary and interdisciplinary, was striking in its embrace of most of the fields we now include under the umbrella of material culture studies: art, architecture, decorative arts, folklife, cartography, agriculture, technology, geography-- all taught from a historical perspective-- were seen as vital to each child's total learning experience.

In order to pursue such topics and their special evidence, Dewey advocated what might be called the "history outside the history classroom."[7] Resources for much cognitive learning were lodged in libraries and archives, but the data for the inquiry method also existed elsewhere-- in museums, in historical agencies, or, in situ, out on the landscape. In The School and Society (1899), Dewey, therefore, recommended that history (and other) teachers make extensive use of such community resources. In Chicago, for instance, the Laboratory School took students to the site of the Chicago portage, the Art Institute, local industries, and, of course, the Chicago Historical Society. Progressive education, in both theory and practice, urged teachers to take their history classes wherever the history had taken place.

Dewey's pedagogy had its greatest impact at the elementary and secondary school level. With a few exceptions (for instance, Abner Bushnell Hart's pioneering work with cartography or Dixon Ryan Fox's research in social history) most American collegiate and university history classes lacked any material culture perspective. Hence the isolated career of Thomas J. Wertenbaker, professor of colonial history, is all the more striking. During his long years (1910-1966) at Princeton University, Wertenbaker preached a brand of material culture history in his classroom as well as practiced it in his numerous books on colonial urban, cultural, and social history.

His courses and seminars were not novel as to method but as to content. Beginning his teaching career in the traditional, and highly respected field of American political history, Wertenbaker soon widened his vision to what he came to call the neglected "field of colonial culture." His courses came to be titled American Civilization and they were offered in Princeton's early interdisciplinary program in American Studies. In such course, Wertenbaker exposed students to Quaker vernacular architecture, Swiss barn types, American highboys, New England field patterns, transporation artifacts, and recent archaeological excavations at sites such as Jamestown and Williamsburg.

In 1947, Wertenbaker completed his series, The Founding of American Civilization, a trilogy begun in 1938 that demonstrated an impressive knowledge of Anglo-American artifacts of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.[8] In documenting both his classroom teaching and his published research, Wertenbaker was the first established university historian to make extensive use of the Historic American Buildings Survey, the Pictorial Archives of Early American Architecture at the Library of Congress, and the in-house research reports prepared at Colonial Williamsburg. In a field report he authored for the Smithsonian Institution, The Archaeology of Colonial Williamsburg (1964), he urged his fellow historians, especially colonialists, to recognize the importance of archaeological material culture for historical study.

The work of Wertenbaker deserves mention not only because he was practically alone among established university American historians in recognizing the value of material culture as resource material for teaching and writing American history, but also because his professional odyssey is almost archetypal of the generation of many material culture historians, both in university and museum institutions, that followed him. That generation shared several common characteristics. Like Wertenbaker, post-World War II university teachers who became interested in doing American history with American things came to material culture research by some other discipline or vocational route. Few, with the exception of those with anthropological training, such as Fred Kniffen, geographer at Louisiana State University or C. Malcolm Watkins, curator of cultural history at the Smithsonian, or those with a familial interest in antiques, such as Anthony Garvan, historian at the University of Pennsylvania, were specifically trained in interpreting the artifactual record of a literate society. In short, like Wertenbaker, this generation of material culture scholars was largely self-taught in the task of working with artifacts; they were self-taught, usually, through their personal research in the history, art, or technology museum collections with which many of them came to be affiliated and, of course, through years of their own fieldwork. Like all good teachers, they learned a lot on the job.

CHARLES MONTGOMERY: A MENTOR OF ARTIFACT PROFESSIONALS

Of this generation who came into their majority by the late 1950s, Charles Montgomery, curator and senior research fellow in the Winterthur Program (1951-1970) and Professor of Art History at Yale University's Center for American Art and Material Culture (1970-1978), can stand as a most representative example. Montgomery, who took a degree in history from the University of Illinois, contributed to the material culture studies movement in numerous ways. He was an avid and perceptive collector, particularly of American pewter; a careful researcher (his volume on The American Furniture of the Federal Period 1966 remains the definitive work); a diligent curator; and an artistic, imaginative, zealous museum teacher.

Montgomery was also largely responsible for the idea of joining a museum collection (Winterthur) and a university (Delaware) in a partnership of research and teaching, which developed into the pioneering educational experiment now known as the Winterthur Program in Early American Culture. For many years, Montgomery was its administrator, taskmaster, guru, promoter, and most respected teacher. Former students, proteges, and colleagues all recall his unbridled energy and enthusiasm. At Winterthur and at Yale, he was famous for rigging up multiple slide projections with nine screens for optimum visual teaching impact, for his perennial willingness to experiment (he encouraged students to use computers in their art history research), and for his unabashed love of objects-- their texture, ornament, aesthetic proportions, cultural and historical significance.

Possessed with an inherently keen sense of observation and sensitivity, Charles Montgomery nurtured his skill through long years of looking and comparing and sharing it in the classroom, the lecture hall, and museum gallery. He set down this "art and mysterie" of connoisseurship in a primer that beginning material culture students still find valuable.[7] He, like Peale, knew the affective power of objects in teaching. He would ask his Winterthur students, for example, to look long and quietly at a double-arm candlestand and then ask them, "Does it sing to you?" As his fellow historian and associate E.McClung Fleming recalled, his teaching objective remained singular throughout his career no matter what learning strategies he employed. His constant aim was to encourage the historical understanding and enjoyment of the American arts and the craftsmen who fashioned them.

In order to do so, he tried all types of ideas: the idea of joining the artifact and the tools which made it, which began Winterthur's Dominy family workshops; the idea of joining the artifact and the word, which resulted in one of the finest museum libraries in the country; the idea of joining the artifact and the image, which grew to a collection of 85,000 photographs and 72,000 slides; the idea of bringing science to bear on the identification of the artifact, which developed into Winterthur's wood analysis and x-ray fluorescence laboratories and its conservation training program; the idea of joining the artifact and its culture, which resulted in the Index of American Cultures which was launched at Winterthur and then moved to the University of Pennsylvania; the idea of experiencing the function (and feel) of an artifact, which inspired Montgomery to do what many curators at Winterthur still consider to be "the most revolutionary of all his projects-- having his students actually sit on (museum) chairs to experience their effect on the body."[10]

Charles Montgomery trained a significant number of the current generation of American history teachers who include artifacts in their own teaching. His influence at Winterthur and then later at Yale can be paralleled by other mentors who have influenced the material culture teaching and research of the last decades: Fred Kniffen at Louisiana State University, Louis C. Jones at the Cooperstown Graduate Program, Anthony Garvan at the University of Pennsylvania, J.B. Jackson at the University of California, John Kouwenhoven at Columbia, Eugene Ferguson at the Hagley Museum and many others.

These students of the artifact, their students, and now their students, share, I think, several characteristics with their counterparts of the past. For example, like Peale and Dewey, the current generation of historians working with material culture as evidence see it as a way to make American history more populist. They argue that only a small percentage of the world's population is and has been literate and that individuals who write literature or keep diaries are quite atypical. Artifacts, which are used by a much broader cross-section or the population, offer a potentially more wide-ranging, more democratic source of information than words. Material culture evidence may afford a way to understand the minds of the great majority of people in the past who were non-literate, who remain otherwise inaccessible except through impersonal records.

As will be evident from the six essays that follow, contemporary material culture historians also recognize and aspire to contribute to a more pluralistic history that ancestors like Wilcomb and Wertenbaker helped to forge. Those who advocate including artifacts in the acceptable canon of historical data insist they have not only widened the historian's evidential pool, but they have also expanded the traditional boundaries of historical knowledge. Resorting to material culture data has often made for a more multiple, heterogeneous, and expanded version (and vision) of the American past.

Finally, past and present devotees of the artifact have common cause in their mutual dedication to public history, a history that reaches beyond the scholarly journals and the graduate seminar rooms. Such history seeks to pervade our common and communal lives-- a history that, as Dewey hoped, is to be found in both the school and the society. Teachers, from Peale to Montgomery, have often found the artifact, in any number of ways, to be an extremely effective method of creating such a popular historical understanding. In short, doing American history with American things has been seen as one approach in helping individuals move from their own store of personal experiences outward to a knowledge which lets them form wider human identifications with other parts of their community and with people remote from themselves in time as well as space.

Notes

1. "Material Culture Studies in America, 1876-1976," Chapter 1 in *Material Culture Studies in America* edited by Thomas J. Schlereth (Nashville, Tennessee: American Association for State and Local History, 1982).

2. Jules D. Prown, "Material Culture and the Use of Artifacts as Cultural Evidence," *Winterthur Portfolio*, 17 (Forthcoming: Spring 1982).

3. Harold K. Skramstad, "Interpreting Material Culture: A View From the Other Side of the Glass," in *Material Culture and the Study of American Life* edited by Ian M.G. Quimby (New York: W.W. Norton, 1978), 175-177; Charles Coleman Sellers, "Peale's Museum and 'The New Museum Idea,'" *Proceedings of the American Philosophical Society*, 124 (February: 1980): 25-34.

4. Quoted in Melinda Young Frye, "Pioneers in American Museums: Charles P. Wilcomb," *Museum News*,(May/June: 1977), 57.

5. *Ibid*., 58.

6. Peter H. Martorella, "John Dewey: Problem-Solving and History Teaching," *Social Studies*, 69 (1978): 190-194.

7. See the essay, "History Outside the Classroom" in Thomas J. Schlereth, *Artifact and the American Past* (Nashville: AASLH, 1980),1-11.

8. Consult Thomas J. Wertenbaker's introductions in *The Founding of American Civilization: The Middle Colonies* (New York: Scribners, 1938); *The Founding of American Civilization: The Old South* (New York: Scribners, 1942); *The Founding of American Civilization: The Puritan Oligarchy* (New York: Scribners, 1947).

9. Charles F. Montgomery, "Some Remarks on the Practice and Science of Connoisseurship," *American Walpole Society Notebook* (1961):7-20, and reprinted in Chapter 8 of Thomas J. Schlereth, *Material Culture Studies in America* (Nashville: AASLH, 1982).

10. E.McClung Fleming, *A Tribute to Charles F. Montgomery, 1910-1978* (New Haven: Yale University Art Gallery, 1978), 2.

The Colloquim

We began the HAL project with the expectation that we would foster an interdisciplinary exchange among professionals who taught history-- or were concerned about the teaching of history-- with material culture evidence in a variety of settings.

One of our tools for gathering and disseminating information was a two-day colloquium which took place on September 13 and 14, 1981. It was sponsored by the National Endowment for the Humanities with much kind assistance from Colonial Williamsburg staff. Our reasons for convening the colloquium were two-fold: first, to elicit new evidence of how artifacts are useful in teaching history; second, to encourage statements from the participants that would allow us to evaluate the impact of various methodologies in material culture research on the present state of the art of teaching history from artifacts.

A series of HAL team meetings that included input from museum people and academicians around the country allowed us to set the following goals for the colloquium:

- To introduce statements of theory and/or methodology that we had identified as significant in teaching history with artifacts
- To consider how these statements had influenced the practice of teaching history with material culture evidence
- To identify people, places and projects that apply these methodologies
- To provide a forum in which participants could share their general concerns and could suggest further sources for research and ideas for an ultimate final product

Because the significant statements that have influenced theory and method are not direct applications of such theory to practice, we asked six practitioners or disciples of these methodologies to interpret ramifications of those statements specifically for our project. These presenters were selected from among the colloquium's participants, people whose work we had encountered in earlier phases of our project. We appreciate the thoughtful preparation of the six museum and academy professionals who served as presenters: Barbara Carson, Carter Hudgins, Steven Hamp, Candace Tangorra Matelic, Carol Stapp, and John Vlach.

The assignment to each of the six was to summarize and analyze assigned readings that are, to a greater or lesser degree, part of a body of classic statements on the uses of material culture. Each presenter was asked also to discuss the impact of the readings on current theory and practice in the areas of material culture research that he or she knew best, and also to make some predictions on where these current trends might take us in the future.

The colloquium papers were focused by traditional disciplinary affiliation. It could be debated, as indeed we have debated among ourselves, that other kinds of categorization might have made certain of the papers more accessible to certain readers and their more individual concerns. For instance, we realize that we could have organized the papers by present trends in teaching or classes of artifacts. We considered several other schemes by which to organize the colloquium. We remained convinced however that the primary function of the categories was to create order. Hence, when we came to planning the colloquium, we were comfortable with the least number of categories suggesting the broadest implications of content and those with which we felt most readers would be familiar. A traditional disciplinary typology seemed to best serve that criterion.

The relationships that we have imposed upon categories, methodologies, the readings, the presenters, and some teaching practices we identified during the project are set out in table form on the following page. Each disciplinary category (e.g., Art History/ Decorative Arts History) in this table implies its own methodology or methodologies. Each author suggests, in the reading we chose to represent him, a theory for applying the methodology of his discipline to the endeavor of learning from artifacts. Thus, in the upper left corner of the table, under the category "Art History/ Decorative Arts History," we list Charles Montgomery who used methodologies of art history to instruct his students in connoisseurship, which, he theorized, could be raised to a level of critical analysis useful to scholarship. An analysis of Montgomery's thesis and methods are to be found in Barbara Carson's paper. Some instances where Montgomery's work has been applied are listed beneath his name. We would like to stress one point that the table overlooks: the complexity of an author's work often crosses the divisions we have imposed. James Deetz, for instance, employs methodologies of cultural geography, cultural anthropology, folklore and others, as well as those of historical archaeology, the section of our table in which he appears. Thus we have designated the disciplines in our table "primary entry points." These are the points from which each author entered the arena of teaching history with material culture evidence. The theses and methods they offer us however reach far beyond the limits of the disciplines from which they spring.

After the presentation of the six papers at the colloquium, Tom Schlereth, an academician, offered an analysis of the proceedings that far, and Barnes Riznik, a museum director, reflected on how the history museum profession has developed. The six papers, the transcript and general discussion follow the table.

Barbara C. Fertig

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ART HISTORY & DECORATIVE ARTS HISTORY

PROPONENT: Charles Montgomery
APPLICATIONS:

☐ The didactic installation of the Garvan Collection of Decorative Arts, Yale Art Gallery, fosters comparisons of style, value, craftsmanship—elements that Montgomery was trying to teach in "Connoisseurship" and his other courses at Yale.

☐ The ED 125 course at George Washington University is designed for students without prior experience in learning directly from objects. Using Montgomery's fourteen points as a guide, students practice critical analysis of self-selected artifacts as a means of gathering information directly relevant to their individual major areas of study.

PROPONENT: E. McClung Fleming
APPLICATIONS:

☐ Using the resources in Americana of The Skinner Museum, faculty and students from Mount Holyoke College conciously incorporate the analysis of objects as primary sources into all their studies. Student-faculty forums about the use of objects in their coursework, short courses in museum studies, and interdisciplinary courses further heighten the campus effort.

☐ Through observations in local buildings and assessment of their built environment context, students in Jeff Miekele's course "Twentieth Century Architecture," at the University of Texas, Austin, gather information and draw conclusions based on firsthand experience with the objects under discussion.

☐ The Curiosity Shop, Philadelphia Museum of Art, was a workshop where elementary and secondary students could look, touch and record the physical characteristics of objects to learn information about the objects' makers, methods of making, and uses, and then to draw conclusions about the culture that produced the objects.

PROPONENT: Kenneth Ames
APPLICATION:

☐ The exhibition, "American Quilts, A Handmade Legacy," and film, "Quilts in Women's Lives: Six Portraits," at the Oakland Museum, California, January 13 - April 1, 1981, presented the artifacts as the products of their makers and explored the symbolism as well as the process.

PROPONENT: John Dewey
APPLICATION:

☐ Tucson Public Library staff help youth experience their city firsthand through its history, philosophy, archaeology, and aesthetics. Participants then develop models of "dream" cities, adapted to current needs of existing populations.

PROPONENT: Charles Wilcomb
APPLICATIONS:

☐ Using an outdoor advertising format at subway stops, in bars, factories and churches, LaGuardia Community College informs the Queens community about its history of work, family life, housing, leisure, and transportation. These exhibits in public places coupled with seminars on local history focus the general public's attention on changes in its environment.

☐ In its teaching, the education staff at the Philadelphia Museum of Art uses period room installations as total environments rather than as showcases for decorative arts.

HISTORY OF TECHNOLOGY

PROPONENT: Brooke Hindle
APPLICATION:

☐ Permanent exhibitions on the pueblo's ceremonials and its well-known potters inform visitors and, for the residents, elevate their routine to the status of symbolism.

PROPONENT: John Schlebecker
APPLICATIONS:

☐ In-school programs for differing ages explore the relationship of the nineteenth-century textile mill, Slater Mill Historic Site, Pawtucket, Rhode Island, and the technology it represents to common aspects of students' lives. Experimentation with crude fibers and observation of finished fabric illustrates the usefulness of the technology; a slide-lecture and mechanical demonstration introduce New England's traditional use of water power and lead to discussions of its potential in an energy-scarce future.

☐ Visitors to the Building Trades Fair at the National Building Museum, Washington, D.C., handled bricks and mortar, operated an elevator model and monitored plumbing and electrical systems, all under the instruction of men and women in those and other trades.

PROPONENT: Eugene Ferguson
APPLICATION:

☐ Through examples of typical moldings, roofs, painted screens, and a few furnished rooms, The Peale Museum's exhibition, "Rowhouse: A Baltimore Style of Living," uses objects to illustrate the history of the rowhouse.

SOCIAL HISTORY

PROPONENT: John Demos
APPLICATIONS:

☐ At the Philadelphia Museum of Art's Bicentennial exhibition, "Portrait of An American Family," family life through three centuries was interpreted by focusing on attributes of family portraits.

☐ The artifacts in the Cleveland Museum of Art's exhibition, "Afro American Tradition in Decorative Arts," John Vlach as guest curator, introduced to a large segment of the population the notion that the history of black Americans was far richer than they had imagined.

PROPONENT: John Dewey
APPLICATION:

☐ Mary Edith Sawyer's personal possessions, circa World War I, provide the substance from which workshop participants learn to identify and extract humanistic themes. These materials are typical of donations made to small historical agencies and evoke from the museum professionals the kinds of personal identification and recounting of memories that the average exhibition visitor might experience, providing insight into planning for a variety of audiences. The workshop is offered by the Association for State and Local History.

FOOTNOTE: Applications may be more often than not a synthesis of the work of more than one proponent. We have attempted to match applications with the proponent whose work is most visible in the application. A fuller consideration of the theories of material culture study in table format appears in *Material Culture Studies in America*, edited by Thomas J. Schlereth (Nashville TN: AASLH, 1982).

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HISTORICAL ARCHAEOLOGY

PROPONENT: James Deetz
APPLICATIONS:

☐ At the University of California, Berkeley, Deetz teaches a course in the late nineteenth-century history of the region through on-going excavation at Somerville, a coal mining town. Students are involved in the field work excavation as well as analysis and interpretation with other traditional resources, like documents, cartographic records and mail order catalogues.

☐ DeTours, a project of The Children's Museum, Boston, provides adolescents with skills and information to uncover the historical and cultural resources of metropolitan Boston via public transportation.

CULTURAL GEOGRAPHY

PROPONENT: J. B. Jackson
APPLICATIONS:

☐ Boston's "Freedom Trail" allows tourists to design their own history lesson and observe the growth of the city around its eighteenth-century monuments.

☐ The Natchez Trace Parkway in Mississippi uses attractive signage at convenient pull-offs to mark the sites of historic events in what has become a bucolic setting.

PROPONENT: Fred Kniffen
APPLICATIONS:

☐ Resident adolescents accompany and assist professional staff in identifying, collecting and photographing historic Hispanic resources of Old Laredo, Webb County, Texas. Adding information garnered by oral history, students will produce a guidebook to the county resources.

☐ In Main Street, U.S.A., a project of the University of Texas, Austin, students of Wayne Bell use architectural measurements and particularistic observation in order to draw cultural conclusions.

☐ Land features and extant buildings provide the evidence from which students at the University of Notre Dame draw conclusions about their university's history, in "American Material Culture: The History of the Land," taught by Thomas J. Schlereth.

PROPONENT: Darwin Kelsey
APPLICATIONS:

☐ The social and practical sides of making, serving and cleaning up after a lavish dinner in the James J. Hill House, St. Paul, convey a sense of the relationships among and between residents and servants at the turn of the century.

☐ The Camron-Stanford House is the last of the comfortable nineteenth-century homes that once dominated the Lake Merritt area of Oakland, California. The house is interpreted not only as the residence of one particular family, but also as a model of life lived by a particular class at that time.

☐ The staff of Clayville Rural Life Center, Springfield, Illinois, recommends that its unfocused collection of nineteenth-century buildings and artifacts be presented as an unmatched set of time periods and purposes. The staff intends to use four modes of historical interpretation—historic house museum, living history farm, craft demonstrations, and exhibits.

FOLKLORE & CULTURAL ANTHROPOLOGY

PROPONENT: Henry Glassie
APPLICATIONS:

☐ Using Glassie as a consultant, the Education Department of the Yale Art Gallery re-oriented the content of its lessons about its Garvan Collection to include Glassie's structuralist approach.

☐ Among the many uses for artifacts in teaching that were inspired by their training in the Mid-South Humanities Project, two secondary teachers in Bossier City, Louisiana, share site visits as lessons for both English and history requirements.

PROPONENT: Charles Willson Peale
APPLICATION:

☐ Through exhibitions, cultural similarities and differences, traditions and accomplishments of Pueblo dwellers are presented with a minimum of words and maximum of easily absorbed visual information. At the Pueblo Cultural Center, Albuquerque, these exhibits make a compelling argument for the use of material culture as an accurate, readily perceptible identification of a group of people on their own terms rather than through the abstractions of others who seek to define them.

PROPONENT: Howard Marshall
APPLICATIONS:

☐ Colonial Williamsburg's choice to portray the past through professional actors and thoroughly documented scripts represents a major departure within the institution that once set the standard for lecture-tours. On the street or in the Governor's Palace, visitors are encouraged to interact with the actors to experience eighteenth-century life from the viewpoint of footmen, house servants, gardeners, and political aides. The experience becomes "an artifact" in itself.

☐ Travellers on the restored Natchez Trace, Mississippi, are welcomed to a nineteenth-century way station by role playing interpreters whose conversation leads to a consideration of the differences in travel conditions then and now.

☐ Visitors to Plimoth Plantation, Massachusetts, are expected to interact with interpreters whose dress, accents, world and community views, and general lifestyle reflect those of recent settlers to seventeenth-century New England.

PROPONENT: John Dewey
APPLICATIONS:

☐ Students from Williams College earn credit in American literature at Mystic Seaport. One instructor held classes below deck in a whaling ship where students considered space, sound, and rhythm as sources for Melville style.

☐ Employing a variety of media, the Center for Southern Folklore, Memphis, Tennessee, preserves otherwise ephemeral folk artifacts and fosters an appreciation both in and out of its region for the traditional acts of everyday people.

ART HISTORY / DECORATIVE ARTS HISTORY

Roads in Wonderland

BARBARA G. CARSON

Charles Montgomery, "Remarks on the Practice and Science of Connoisseurship,"
Walpole Society Notebook (1961)

Kenneth Ames, "Material Culture as Non-Verbal Communication:
A Historical Case Study," *Journal of American Culture* (1981)

E. McClung Fleming, "Artifact Study, A Proposed Model," *Winterthur Portfolio* (1974)

The ways in which material culture can be used in the teaching of history appear to me to be like the roads in Wonderland. Remember when Alice was in the woods, the Cheshire Cat appeared, and Alice asked, "... Please, which way I ought to go from here?"

"That depends a good deal on where you want to get to," said the Cat.
"I don't much care where--," said Alice.
"Then it doesn't matter which way you go," said the Cat.
"-- so long as I get somewhere," Alice added as an explanation.
"Oh, you're sure to do that," said the Cat, "if you only walk long enough."

The three articles assigned to me from the fields of art and decorative art history are unquestionably important articles for the study of material culture, but it is a long and ill-marked road and an energetic and strenuous walk to meet up with history and art history somewhere along the way. This afternoon I'm going to discuss each article individually and then try to find a reasonable route to link them first together and then with the study of history, straight history and art history.

In "Some Remarks on the Practice and Science of Connoisseurship," Charles F. Montgomery attempted to analyze the attributes of a connoisseur so he could more quickly and more effectively help a novice to develop latent abilities. For the decorative arts, connoisseurship is a process of considering craft-made objects. The process, according to Montgomery, can be both intuitive and analytical. "The goal is to determine the date and place of manufacture; the author, if possible; and where within the range of its fellows the object stands in terms of its condition, excellence of execution, and success as a work of art."[1] Montgomery lists fourteen steps a connoisseur may take in the effort to authenticate, attribute, and evaluate objects.[2]

The fourteen steps seem to me to reflect the personal characteristics of the author and the general characteristics of the time at which he wrote the article. Charles Montgomery was not an academically trained scholar. Nor was he a theoretical model builder. He was a collector, curator and dealer, and a scholar, writer, and teacher. Mostly he was a creative, energetic thinker about questions that interested him irrespective of boundaries of academic disciplines. From his experiences as and associations with dealers, curators, and collectors, Montgomery knew firsthand the kind of personal thrill some people receive from particular objects. The question is how do objects generate that rush of pleasure. While Montgomery's essay analyzes objects, his goal was to gain a better understanding of an emotional response so he could help more people experience it.

In 1961 when the essay on connoisseurship was first privately printed by a club of serious collectors of Americana, it was altogether novel. No academic disciplines considering the American historical past were seriously addressing questions about artifacts. On the list of eighteen articles selected by the committee organizing this colloquium, it is by far the earliest. The other seventeen articles date between 1974 and 1981. Montgomery's essay was reprinted on the occasion of his retirement from Yale in 1978.

The fourteen points he lists offer a variety of visual, historical, scientific, and subjective ways to consider craft objects. Some, like overall appearance, form, ornament, and color, focus principally on visual qualities of an object. However, the comments under these headings are not strictly visual. The discussion of form, for instance, includes a brief description of the historical practice of scratching the weight of silver on the bottom and a consideration of how comparison with the present weight of the piece can alert a connoisseur to changes in form that affect the authenticity of an object. Analysis of materials-- under which the silver-weighing discussion might have been placed-- is strictly scientific and includes examination of objects with ultra-violet light and with microscopes. Although out-of-date in its details, it addresses the general subject. Craft techniques, trade practices, and function depend principally upon historical research. Style, date, attribution, and history of the object and its meaning combine visual analysis and historical research. The last of Montgomery's points, condition and evaluation, involve subjective assessments.

Some of Montgomery's points receive more thorough coverage by other writers.[3] His list is incorporated directly or by implication in later theoretical frameworks for considering objects. We'll turn to one by Fleming in a moment.[4] Montgomery's essay is still worthy of serious interest because it concentrates on things. The things stand by themselves. They are not pushed and shoved according to the bias of any scholarly discipline. Cultural geographers, anthropologists, folklorists, social historians, and art historians use objects for what they assume is a higher purpose, to further their own arguments and interpretations. For Montgomery, at least in this essay, the object comes first and is followed by the eager connoisseur who appreciates it for its relative merits on all fourteen points. The connoisseur, in Montgomery's words, "is captured by the appeal of the object as a work of magic, the magic of hand and mind sometimes called craftsmanship, but in reality art."[5]

Thirteen years later, Mac Fleming wrote "Artifact Study: A Proposed Model." A trained historian who for about twenty years directed the educational program at the Winterthur Museum, Fleming understood that if artifacts were to be taken seriously as cultural evidence, they had to be offered up in a way that met the needs of scholars. A scholar may be a connoisseur, but scholarly uses of artifacts extend beyond authentication, attribution, evaluation, and personal enthusiasm. It is perhaps not too far-fetched to compare artifact study to the development of natural history. Naturalists oohed and aahed over the wonders of life forms and only gradually settled down to the time-consuming business of systematic collecting, sorting and classifying, and thinking and analyzing which, in turn, have led to broad-based interpretations and theories.[6] Fleming quotes George Kubler on the state of art history.

> In the history of art, which is a young discipline, it has long been necessary to restrict attention to manageable questions like artistic biography and catalogues and iconography. It is now apparent that those tasks have been accomplished and that we need not repeat them over and over.... Many more new tasks lie in connecting the history of art with other fields of thought.[7]

The study of artifacts lags a little behind art history, but it is increasingly clear (and all the articles under consideration here today testify to my assertion) that while the gathering and sorting and cataloguing are by no means finished, many people are thinking about the evidence and are coming up with all sorts of intriguing possibilities, many of them of an interdisciplinary nature.

Fleming acknowledges that his model "bears the special impress of thinking oriented toward cultural history," but he hopes it is "equally applicable in other areas of study." As he says, "The model utilizes two conceptual tools-- a fivefold classification of the basic properties of an artifact and a set of four operations to be performed on these properties."[8] The five basic properties are history, material, construction, design, and function. The first two of the four operations are (1) identification, which includes authentication, and (2) evaluation. All of Montgomery's fourteen points about connoisseurship find their way into these stages of Fleming's model. The last two operations are cultural analysis and interpretation. Some of the properties and operations overlap and supplement each other. For instance, function is a basic property. It is also an aspect of cultural analysis. Cultural analysis considers the artifact in relation to its own culture. Interpretation, "focuses on the relation between some fact learned about the artifact and some key aspect of our current value system."[9]

In the last half of his article, Fleming applies the model to a seventeenth-century Massachusetts court cupboard. In working his way through the five properties and four operations, Fleming acknowledges assistance from at least one colleague and several students. Full application of the model to even a single artifact is labor intensive and time-consuming.

In his article, "Material Culture as NonVerbal Communication: A Historical Case Study," Ken Ames discusses a number of concepts of the social uses of domestic objects, focuses on one, and details four functions of the parlor organ in late nineteenth-century America.

Parlor organs were popular from about 1870 to 1900. Compared to pianos they were smaller, cheaper, and more "closely linked to changing styles and fashions." [10] The mass-produced works were housed in the lower section; the musically superfluous upper section served as a display area for knick-knacks, family photographs, and other possessions.

Nowhere in the article does Ames mention a specific parlor organ surviving in private or public collections. No connoisseurship in the Montgomery sense is exhibited in his work. Nor is he interested in following the entirety of Fleming's model for artifact studies. In this essay, Ames does not demonstrate familiarity with Fleming's five properties or his first two operations. These, you may remember, were similar to Montgomery's fourteen points. Ames does not even use artifacts. Instead of studying parlor organs directly, he uses illustrated advertisements promoting their sale and photographs showing their use in domestic settings. His essay concentrates on the last two of Fleming's operations, cultural analysis and interpretation. Photographs and advertisements are, of course, artifacts in their own right and could receive detailed study about their paper, ink, typefaces, emulsions, and so forth. Ames doesn't do this. He assumes his advertisements and photographs are authentic; his readers are, not unreasonably, expected to do likewise.

In what I found to be a thoroughly absorbing exposition, Ames analyzed how late nineteenth-century Americans used parlor organs. Objects serve a variety of functions. A parlor organ makes music. This is its manifest function according to Robert K. Merton or its technomic function according to Lewis Binford. Objects also serve latent functions. Binford subdivides Merton's latent function into two categories. Socio-technic function involves the use of objects in contexts of social interaction. "Ideo-technic function describes the use of objects in religious and psychological contexts."[11] Ames focuses interest on socio-technic functions.

He mentions how parlor organs compartmentalized and identified time in the lives of their owners and how they changed their owner's self and public images. In the longest section of the paper, he then details four nonverbal ways that parlor organs communicated social values in their own time and place. First, parlor organs helped Victorian Americans "engage in and extend conventionalized social roles."[12] Using recent studies in women's history, Ames shows how the women's world of domesticity and childbearing and their twin roles of consumer and saint were expressed in a photograph of a mother playing an organ for her child and her parents. Presumably her husband is off earning money to sustain the cozy setting. The presence of three generations in such a photograph furthers Ames's second and third points about how artifacts "promote social and cultural continuity over time" and about how they encourage social bonding in familial groups. Finally, the parlor organ enhanced the player's life through the rewarding experience of displaying competence or even mastery of a skill, and it enhanced the listeners' or group singers' lives through the satisfying sense of shared activity.

Ames argues that people's social needs remain fairly constant over time even though "the way these needs are met may vary considerably." What differentiates Victorian Americans from us today is less a different set of needs than a distinctly different pattern of responses to those needs.[13] Ames ends with a note of caution. "There may be considerable difference between the public meanings of objects as evident in advertising imagery and the personal or private meanings that these objects had for their owners and users."[14] True,but Ames has given us a valuable example of thoughtful speculation and interpretation into the "subtle ways people use objects in their social lives."[15]

There is a clear relationship among the points about artifacts spelled out in the three articles. Fleming's model, which seems to me to be sufficiently comprehensive for any work with artifacts, provides the connecting framework. I don't think you need to listen to another recital of fourteen points in relation to five principles and four operations combined with concepts like manifest and latent, technomic, sociotechnic, and ideo-technic function. Montgomery's concern is with things; Ames's with cultural analysis and interpretation. To be fair, I should add that the focus on one or the other areas in those two articles does not imply that their authors deny the importance of the other area. Ames is fully capable of connoisseurship and Montgomery has keen interest in cultural analysis. However, in these two articles, they are seemingly considering different aspects of the study of artifacts as outlined in Fleming's model.

In spite of this obvious difference, I think, in fact, the two share an important interest. Montgomery wanted to understand the process whereby people today respond intuitively and logically to objects from the past. Ames wants to understand the direct and subtle responses of people in the past to objects from their own culture. Montgomery's analysis of visual and technological qualities is very successful. If students are taught to look at objects along the lines he offers, they do quickly develop an increased appreciation for them and a more logical way to articulate their appreciation. However, a person can learn this, and learn it well, without ever absorbing the passion of a collector. I think latent or socio-technic functions similar to those discussed by Ames are more helpful in explaining why some people respond so enthusiastically to artifacts. Demonstrating skill as a connoisseur undoubtedly provides personal satisfaction similar to that of playing a parlor organ. Collecting particular artifacts brings one into the company of others with whom one has the pleasure of sharing a common activity. About the cost of collecting, Montgomery says, "Whereas in the joy of a treasure one soon forgets a high price paid, in the possession of the second-rate one remembers only its cheapness."[16] Ames says that people know that a major purchase will "transform them in their own eyes and in the eyes of others."[17] In Thorstein Veblen's terms, they receive more respect and deference, acquire greater status. Aesthetic appreciation combined with a heightened sense of personal and social well-being undoubtedly provide joys sufficient to justify a very high purchase price.

I bring all this up, not because I think Montgomery should have, (he did quite enough to analyze one aspect of connoisseurship), but because I think doing so helps underscore the importance of what Ames has done. Ames expressed caution about his use of artifacts and nonverbal communication in the study of history. The problem is not that artifacts are not important in people's lives and therefore important in history and art history. The problem is that historians are accustomed to literary or quantitative evidence. They have no confidence and few techniques to understand the complex dimensions of artifacts. Historians traditionally resort to written record sources. Artifact studies, semiotics, and exercises in visual thinking are highly nonverbal and hence seemingly incapable of scholarly proof. Historians are not predisposed to seriously consider such evidence. They are likely to respond, "Very tantalizing, but where's the proof? I can't give your arguments my time and attention unless you have proof." Of course, historians speculate, interpret, and theorize, but they do so based on verbal statements or on certain kinds of statistical evidence. Just as creative historians developed ways of making parish registers and other sources convey acceptable information about inarticulate populations, so different historians need to come up with ways and standards to make artifact studies comprehensible and acceptable.

Curiously, art historians have the same problem with visual evidence. They are hardly more willing than historians to deviate from arguments that are essentially based on verbal evidence. In its narrower uses, iconographical analysis of painting and sculpture builds upon knowledge of literary sources. In its broader use, it moves on to personal psychology and world views, but these usually are derived from literary evidence.

It is my personal opinion that artifact studies are due for a breakthrough. In the past, people looked at and thought about stuffed birds, preserved butterflies, and fossilized remains long enough to come up with suggestions about their relationships. Today other people are working with pewter pots, court cupboards, and parlor organs. Like Alice, we know we want to get somewhere, but we are not at all certain which roads beyond those of cataloguing and assembling biographical information will be direct and safe. Models like Fleming's and lists like Montgomery's have been very helpful to suggest a sense of direction for people's energy. Analyses like those of provided by Fleming and Ames further encourage the effort. We need more. And we need guidelines by which to judge the respectability of responsible speculation about the historical roles of artifacts.

Notes

1. Charles F. Montgomery, "Some Remarks on the Practice and Science of Connoisseurship," American Walpole Society Notebook (1961):7-20, and reprinted in Chapter 8 of Thomas J. Schlereth, Material Culture Studies in America (Nashville: AASLH, 1982).

2. For best brief statement I know of about connoisseurship, see David Alan Brown, Berenson and the Connoisseurship of Italian Painting (Washington, D.C.: National Gallery of Art,1979), 11.

3. For instance, in Man the Designer, Helen Marie Evans discusses the elements (line, form, space, time, movement, light, color, texture) and the principles (proportion, balance, rhythm, emphasis, unity) in detail. David Pye in The Nature and Art of Workmanship evaluates that aspect of a craft product.

4. See also Fred Schroeder, "Designing your Exhibits: seven ways to look at an artifact," History News, 31:11 (November 1976).

5. Montgomery, 9.

6. For the way Louis Agassiz trained students to observe live animals, see Samuel H. Scudder, "Take this Fish and Look at It."

7. E. McClung Fleming,"Artifact Study, A Proposed Model," Winterthur Portfolio (1974], 158.

8. Ibid., 154.

9. Ibid., 161.

10. Kenneth Ames, "Material Culture as NonVerbal Communication: A Historical Case Study," Journal of American Culture (1981], 623.

11. Robert K. Merton, Social Theory and Social Structure, 19-84, and James Deetz, "Ceramics from Plymouth, 1620-1835: The Archaeological Evidence," in Ceramics in America, edited by Ian M.G. Quimby, 19-20.

12. Ames, 619.

13. Ibid., 638.

14. Ibid., 640.

15. Montgomery, 9.

16. Ames, 625.

17. In Antiques CXIX:5 (May:1981), the articles are by Betty Ring, Roderic H. Blackburn, John L. Scherer, and Lisa and Mike Moses, respectively.

HISTORICAL ARCHAEOLOGY

Half Sunk in the Sand: Some Thoughts from Underground on Artifacts, Historical Archaeology & Teaching

CARTER L. HUDGINS

◆

James Deetz, "Material Culture and Archaeology—What's the Difference?"
Historical Archaeology (1977)

◆

James Deetz, "Scientific Humanism and Humanistic Science:
A Plea for Paradigmatic Pluralism in Historical Archaeology,"
(Unpublished paper, 1981)

◆

Leland Ferguson, "Historical Archaeology
and the Importance of Material Things," *Historical Archaeology* (1977)

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I had puzzled for several hours over how to start this paper when I remembered a poem we all read as high schoolers. Many of its lines were still clear to me; and, even more surprising, I was able to stumble through the whole thing. It was interesting, at least to me, that the memory of my old English teacher was still strong enough to make me stand up straight and start my palms sweating as I plodded toward the last line. But what was more to the point of the paper I was writing, a dim bulb coming on told me that the poem might be the ideal metaphor for the implications that recent theoretical trends in historical archaeology hold for teaching history:

> I met a traveler from an antique land,
> Who said-- "Two vast and trunkless legs of stone
> Stand in the desert.... Near them, on the sand,
> Half sunk, a shattered visage lies, whose frown,
> And wrinkled lip, and sneer of cold command,
> Tell that its sculptor well those passions read
> Which yet survive stamped on these lifeless things,
> The hand that mocked them, and the heart that fed;
> And on a pedestal, these words appear:
> My name is Ozymandius, King of Kings,
> Look on my works, ye Mighty, and despair!
> Nothing beside remains. Round the decay
> Of that collossal wreck, boundless and bare,
> The lone and level sands stretch far away.

Keats' "Ozymandius" seemed an appropriate way to begin a discussion of artifacts and teaching history because it was, in part, inspired by the "rage antiquaire" that attended the late eighteenth century birthing of archaeology as a "science." Even more, the poem seemed a fitting introduction because its probing of the psychological forces that underlay the shattered collossus is very similar to the thrust of the three papers I will discuss this afternoon.

Of the three papers I was told I might use as a springboard for my remarks, two are by Professor James Deetz. The third, Leland Ferguson's "Historical Archaeology and the Importance of Material Things," introduced the thematic session of the 1975 meeting of the Society for Historical Archaeology at Charleston, South Carolina. Deetz was one of a half-dozen scholars who accepted Ferguson's invitation to gather at Charleston and discuss "the importance of archaeological data--material things-- and the undeveloped potential of those data."[1] Now, after the passage of six years, that symposium has become part of the mythology of historical archaeology. It was, in the 1960s sense of the word, a "happening." As scheduled, the panelists read papers that, predictably, were approvingly applauded; but soon a spontaneous exchange of informal appraisals-- sneers and scowls accompanied by the you-have-failed-to-persuade-me messages of folded arms-- created a sense that something profound was happening even though few in the audience quite knew what it was they were witnessing. Spellbound, they refused to let the discussion end, and they clamored for an overflow session that held the panelists captive well into the night. Historical archaeology, some say, may have come of age that day. At the very least, it has not been the same since.

Ferguson kicked off the excitement by issuing what has become, and actually what already was, one of the underlying premises of archaeological research. He began with the appraisal that material things had not received the attention they deserved, a sentiment shared by the audience. And only a few dissented with his assessment that archaeologists and other students of material culture could, with reasonable accuracy, isolate patterns in the material objects their excavation uncovered.[2] There were, however, more who reddened under Ferguson's thinly disguised if gentle rebuking of most of the preceding twenty years of archaeological research. While he did not suggest that the older research was beyond redemption, Ferguson did argue, and rightly so, that as long as historical archaeology retained its long-standing commitment to eliciting images of one man at one moment in time from the ground, it would remain a hobbled creature, a discipline unable to realize its full potential.

Ferguson's paper was thus a kind of plea that archaeologists broaden their horizons, a pep talk that they give serious thought not only to the immediate application of the data they dug up-- most often lending historical accuracy to history museums and restorations-- but to the more profound implications artifacts have as sources of historical information. James Deetz had already convinced Ferguson that "the historical document does not necessarily contain more truth than artifacts recovered from the ground. Nor, is the structure of phenomena as interpreted through history necessarily more valid than the structure observed and interpreted by the archaeologist."[3] The audience at Charleston generally assumed that to be true, but Ferguson warned them that archaeology would become a significant tool for understanding human behavior only if they explored the

32

implications of Deetz's admonition. More than good faith, however, was required to transform Deetz's sermon about the nature of material evidence and artifacts into archaeological practice. What was needed was a good theoretical perspective.

Deetz's research on ceramics at seventeenth-century Plymouth and New England gravestones had persuaded Ferguson that the material things people leave behind them are a source of historical information as important as the ideas they write down. What Deetz now said in his paper, "Material Culture and Archaeology-- What's the Difference?", was both an answer to Ferguson's plea for a broader definition of material culture and the groundwork for a new theoretical framework for historical archaeology. This paper introduced ideas, some already published, others then evolving, that coalesced two years later (1977) as the book In Small Things Forgotten, The Archaeology of Early American Life.[4] Perhaps most challenging of these ideas was a new definition of material culture. Material culture was, Deetz suggested, "that sector of our physical environment that we modify through culturally determined behavior."[5] This definition includes all artifacts, from the simplest, such as a clothes hanger, to the most complex, the space shuttle Columbia, for example. It includes artifacts dug from the ground, a visored helmet or a piece of a pot, and those that are not, the way men plow their fields or trim their nails. It also includes more ephemeral artifacts, a hook slide into second base or a pas de deux, just two examples of human kinesics, and the flow of celebrants through a receiving line and around a punch bowl at a wedding reception, a single example of proxemics, or the spatial relationship between people. Even language fits under this broad definition. Words are, after all, air masses shaped by vocal chords, lips, teeth, and tongue according to culturally acquired rules. There were, and of course are, many who objected to a definition of material culture that includes in its field of study Boy Scount knots and logos like BAMA that march across football fields as happily as it does porcelain plates and Chippendale chairs. The unpersuaded also grumped when Deetz suggested that archaeology as it is ordinarily perceived is really nothing more than a means to an end. You see, "material culture (should be) the proper study of man."[6]

Looking back at the Charleston meeting, it seems that Deetz's broad definition of material culture straddled the widening theoretical no-man's-land that already separated historical archaeology's two warring research perspectives. More will be said about these later, but a word must first be said about Deetz's role as theoretical diplomat. If there is a corollary to the Deetz definition of material culture, it might be stated that since other disciplines, especially linguistics, have developed analytical techniques for their special subject matters, archaeologists who would work under the broader definition of material culture should adopt those techniques.[7] In practice, Deetz had done just that, and the result was his mini-book In Small Things Forgotten. A broadly interdisciplinary analysis of the culture of early America, this book did not, however, lower the pitch of the debate within the archaeological community of the meaning of material culture. But that controversy and his role in it seems to have warmed Deetz to the arbitrator's chair, and his essay "Scientific Humanism and Humanistic Science: A Plea for Paradigmatic Pluralism in Historical Archaeology" is another graceful attempt to mediate the acrimonious quarreling that has characterized discussions, post Charleston, about the role of artifacts and material culture in historical archaeology.

The archaeological fraternity has long been split into two camps. That should come as no surprise since historical archaeology, unlike its prehistoric parallel, has been practiced by both historians and anthropologists, each group claiming that its methods are the only proper ones. There is no simple way to summarize how it came to be this way or even to define clearly the dogmas of each faction. That must be attempted, however, for in this argument and its resolution lie the clearest indications of the kind of history archaeologists will write. On the one hand, scholars committed to the so-called scientific school of historical archaeology have argued that material culture, or the things that are material culture, are distributed in predictable patterns that, once discovered, will lead scholars to "law-like statements" regarding human behavior. And when revealed, these laws will ultimately make all human action, past and present, understandable. The scientists admonish us to be sensitive to the existence of patterns in the artifactual record, but, since they are based on quantitative data only, archaeologists who count can discover them. Only after we have counted our pot sherds can we define patterns, and only then can we hope to discover the underlying causes of the patterns. For example, the Carolina pattern consists of quantified categories of artifact classes-- Kitchen, Architecture, Arms, Clothing, Activities-- and this pattern is different from others.[8]

On the other hand, the opposing view, labeled particularistic by scientific archaeologists, professes in its most extreme form the view that archaeology is but a *handmaiden* to history. Archaeologists, they say, are but custodians of the trivia of the past. Their fate is to unearth the material remains of events unique in time and place, happenings whose material correlates are also unique and which can only be explained in terms of the same set of unique circumstances.[9] Smith was different from Jones, we are told; he acted freely and independently and was no captive to cultural traits that conspired to shape his eating and drinking habits or plot where he discarded all his best rubbish. Archaeology as it is done by the scientists, the particularists charge. spawns in its trailings of computer tapes and punch cards history that is written in the passive voice. Men and women living in the past become subjects, pushed and pulled this way and that much like laboratory mice. While both these "schools" share a common body of field methods and research tools, the great stress the particularists put on the relationship between documents and objects stands in stark contrast to the scientific school which contends that documents are of secondary importance. Literary sources fill in the gaps the artifacts do not and are, indeed, sources of errors best ignored.

The nether world that lies between these two archaeological perspectives, scientific and particularist, James Deetz has claimed as his own. *In Small Things Forgotten* attempted to acknowledge the complexity of the historical record, but at the same time it was a synthesis of research that had discovered patterns like those coveted by the scholars of the scientific school.[10] Proponents of both perspectives, however, found this attempt to mediate their quarrel too impressionistic, and so Deetz has clarified what has already appeared in print with his "Plea for Paradigmatic Pluralism in Historical Archaeology." The mediation Deetz proposes is a "combination of the particularist's emphasis on detail and documentation and the scientific archaeologist's search for patterned regularity extended to the entire record-- documentary, archaeological, and artifactual.[11] The result will be a more powerful analytical framework for explaining change, and the meaning of that change, in the past.

The shortcomings of the opposing perspectives and the need for a theoretical alternative should be clear enough. Particularism, while rich in texture and substance, is theoretically timid and weak in explanatory power. That Smith had more money than Jones or better taste often masquerades for an explanation in the particularist camp. This is not to suggest that the particularist approach is not valid, but it must be understood that it is only for those "who desire only a narrative history, enriched by the tangibles of the past."[12] But if the particularist's Dick and Jane history is not capable of providing deeper insights into the past, then neither are the scientists. Their publications indicate that they have based their patterns almost exclusively on excavated data, a source that for many reasons, none of which can be discussed at length or with satisfaction in this paper, are distorted. (The reasons run from questions about which sites are chosen to be excavated and why, to how much of the site is actually excavated, to problems of sample reliability, to "intervening" historical factors such as navigation acts and demographics.)[13] Patterns do emerge from this data (that the scientists profess to be surprised by this suggests that they have a low threshhold of amazement), but they are likely to be so broad that they, like the particularist's beguiling story, are exceedingly weak as explanatory devices. We are told, for example, that frontier communities were like some settled communities but not like others, and assured that the pattern of things German colonists threw away was in some ways like and in some ways not like the artifactual imprint their English neighbors left behind. While both perhaps make a descriptive contribution to our understanding of the past, neither explains very much.[14] The scientists' procedures may be framed in more quantitative terms, but all that numerical magic tells us very little about the past. That is so because few archaeologists from the scientific side seem to be asking what the meaning of the patterns they discover is. And when that happens, when "patterns are primarily defined in terms of relative frequencies within artifact classes, be they functional, material, or formal, we are describing lexicon, not grammar, performance, not competence, context, not structure." In other words, archaeologists, with few exceptions, have not yet begun to seek the alterations in thought, the changes in ideas, the shifts in the way people perceived their world and their place in it, that underlie the artifactual changes we can so clearly see in our trenches. Maybe things are now as they were a quarter century ago when J.C. Harrington wrote that archaeology's "contributions to *historical data* are considerable; to *history*, relatively little."[15]

The remedy for this theoretical malaise is, Deetz proposes,an application of the possibly more powerful analytical tools found in structural anthropology. This notion does not originate with Deetz. Henry Glassie first opened the doors of material culture to this method when he applied Levi-Strauss's anthropological structuralism to his study of folk housing in middle Virginia. What Deetz has done is extend this method to other artifact categories and to other times and places. He has demonstrated that the process Glassie used to elucidate the mental world of the folk builder of piedmont Virginia is relevant for the seventeenth-century New England plowman, a nineteenth-century Iowa sod-buster, or an Irish miner living in a California coal town.

Briefly summarized, structuralism holds that human thought is organized and functions according to a universally shared complex of oppositional structures which are mediated differently by different cultures, or by the same culture at a different time. While such a proposition is unprovable (we may or may not think in binary terms) and is thus infuriating to scholars who aspire to order their research in more positivistic terms, structuralism has, Glassie reminds us, "aided in theory building."[17] To explicate the decision-making of the Virginia folk builder, Glassie framed fifteen opposed pairs (Figure 1),page 39. His thinking, and Deetz's after his, is this: "These oppositional pairs are thought to structure subconcious thought, and as such affect all human behavior as it is seen at the observable particularistic level. Accordingly, similar changes taking place in the same direction and at the same time in otherwise unrelated sectors of culture are attributable to changes in the nature of mediations of underlying oppositional structures." Glassie's oppositions rest on the most embracing pair-- that between control and chaos, quite possibly a universal striving-- and the others rank above, closed versus open, private versus public, artificial versus natural, and so on. But whenever the oppositions exist, their mediations are those chosen at a particular piece at a particular time "for the purpose of achieving control over natural substance and human will."[18]

For example, Deetz has demonstrated that toward the end of the eighteenth century, the opposition between intellect and emotion was strongly mediated in favor of the intellectual and, at a deeper level, that between natural and artifical, toward the artifical. Classes of objects which at the particularistic or behavioral level share little in a formal or functional sense, like ladder back chairs and gravestones, or plows and plates, demonstrate the same direction in mediation. In mortuary art, death's heads, symbolic of the tangible remains of the dead, give way to cherubs, a more intellectual, artificial form. Ceramics, made earlier in a variety of hues (browns, greens, yellows) which reflected their natural clayey origins, turn white by the last decades of the eighteenth century, a move toward the artificial and unnatural at about the same time that gravestones not only became white (marble) instead of the greens, blacks, reds and blues, of earlier monuments, but are dressed on all sides, a finishing touch that denies their origins as stones. Food preparation changes too.

The mixed stews and pottages of the seventeenth century give way to lumpier cuisines when cuts of meat emerge from the soup to lie surrounded by potatoes and vegetables on flat plates. From the use of joints of meat, recognizable parts of once-living critters, meat is cut in highly structured, standardized, artificial segments such as steaks and chops. This change is visible archaeologically as the shift from cutting and cleaving to sawing of meat into carefully controlled portions. In building, natural stones give way to brick foundations, trees are cut and hewn to mask their original organic forms, orderly rows of shingles replace wavering lines of tar-streaked boards, and the houses themselves, like ceramics and gravestones, become white in contrast to earlier multi-hued exteriors.

It is most significant that these changes took place at about the same time, later in the eighteenth century, and that the mediations are in the same direction. It would seem then that the shift from many colors to white in houses, ceramics, and gravestones, to extract one shift, is no coincidence. That it is not, however, demands an explanation. Deetz at this point warns that it is not an explanation for why each class of objects turned white that needs to be sought. Asking that question would lead to a traditional answer, one that would explain the change in terms of changing style, taste, values, or simple preference. What should be sought is "an explanation of the underlying shift in mediation of the oppositional structures in question."[19] Whiteness, not the artifacts themselves, becomes the object of interest. And if whiteness in one part of the material culture of early nineteenth-century America can be explained, that same explanation will likely fit all the others. The answer that Deetz finds most convincing for all these shifts is one that is framed in terms of changes in attitude or world view.

By taking great leaps over the evidence that supports Deetz's argument, it is possible to see that the mediation toward artificiality, and the intellectual, is paralleled by mediations in the other categories. There is, for example, a change strongly in favor of symmetry. This shift, contrasted by Deetz against the earlier mediations toward the artificial and intellectual, suggested that a deeper shift, that away from corporate organization toward individualism, was reflected in many aspects of the material culture. The material evidence for this is ample. There was, of course, that sudden and spectacular increase in the amount of ceramics a family "needed" to serve its members. Every householder now had his or her own plate and cup, and other shifts extended the one man, one plate philosophy to other classes of artifacts. Sufficient numbers of chairs to seat every householder crowded into the eighteenth century; individualized burial plots (eventually family cemeteries) dotted landscapes where earlier communities had collected their dead in community burying grounds; private refuse pits replaced communal ones; and more and more private space appeared within houses. To Deetz, these changes signal that old seventeenth century notions about the concept of self and the role of the individual in the larger community were in the midst of change. The old communal order that had arrived in America from old England was in disarray and as men and women adapted to the changes around them and developed new modes of thinking about themselves and their place in the world, the artifacts they made "manifested the changes that had taken place in their minds."[20] Two mental worlds, one the medieval, theocratic order of old England in which the individual was fixed for life in his or her station, the other, and the new, secular, mercantile world where mobility was the norm, collided. For the folks in the collision course of these traditions, the artifacts of the newer culture helped make sense of these changes, eased the transition from old to new, soothed personal dislocations, and brought order out of chaos.

That, very briefly summarized, is what James Deetz thinks we should be doing with the artifacts we choose to study. Now, since Deetz has on more than one occasion pleaded that he not be taken too seriously, there seems little point to dissecting his theoretical perspective here line by line. After all, this paper can not hope to convey the full breadth and power of his argument. Also, the basic premises of his structuralist approach really are not his, and it must be left to folklorists and anthropologists to resolve the knotty problems surrounding the "validity" of structuralism. What I will do, however, is briefly examine some of the assumptions that underly Deetz's thinking about artifacts and history and perhaps make some predictions about archaeology's relationship to them.

First, Henry Glassie argued persuasively in Folk Housing in Middle Virginia that material culture, or a history based on material culture, is more "human" than one that is not. We are all aware that most of the folks who lived in the past wrote very little and had very little written about them; but they did build things, and those that survive, and even those that do not, can be studied by those of us who live in the present. Artifacts are thus a more "democratic" source of historical information, one that can, if the right questions are asked, lead us to the day-to-day lives and concerns of most Americans. While it is undoubtedly true that artifacts really can help us write a history of the "inarticulate," the promise of this assumption has yet to be realized. Part of the fault lies in our archaeological methods; that is, we are far more adept at finding and excavating rich folks' houses than poor men's. I suspect, however, that a far more serious problem is the power that our own culture has over the way we see the past. It may be because they are trained as anthropologists that archaeologists, more than historians, understand that they write from biased perspectives. Nevertheless, their published writings indicate that few archaeologists, even those who study the material culture of minority racial or cultural groups, have thought seriously enough about their own biases to account for them in their thinking about the past -- for example, the relationships of power and authority that exist between an overseer and his hands or a sachem and his warriors. It is perhaps not surprising then that the writing of these overseer/archaeologists often assumes the tone of plantation account books for in recovering a material portion of the past, he has also relived past power structures. Thus, the author of an excellent study of contemporary society on Barbados can interpret black burial practices there in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries as evidence of a white-initiated reward-incentive system rather than one or more of the possible alternatives: (1) the acculturation of blacks from different cultural traditions to each other as much as to the culture of their white masters; (2) the mediation between the tradional cultures of Africa and the culture of the English mercantile world; (3) the resilience of African cultural traditions; or (4) the mediation between two cultures, one white, the other black.[21]

Getting it right will not be easy, but the rewards for continuing our study of the material cultures of minority groups living in the past are sufficient to keep us at it. There seems no better way to make the lives of invisible men and women visible once again or to return the strivings of most folks to the stage of history than through archaeology and material culture studies. By recovering some of the things they made, their lives become more tangible. Perhaps soon we will accomplish the kind of thinking about their artifacts that will allow us to enter the minds of these men and women long dead.

Second, Deetz's writing also makes it clear that if we are to enter the mind of the past, we must think in far broader terms than we are accustomed. Most of us thought we had done just that when we mulled the relative merits of modernization theory or sampled some of the behavorist dream dust that blew our way in the 1970s. That experience may explain why some of us, most of us, will resist Deetz's urging to look to the "rise of individualism" when we decide it is time to add some "rigor" to our interpretations. We do so at our own peril. Listening to Deetz and adjusting our blinders really is not that bad an idea; it will force us to consider the broader issues that shaped the past. Certainly, the collision of the pre-and post-market cultures is one such issue, but there will be others because it may be that the greatest potential the study of material culture has is its ability to force us to think about the world we have lost in ways that might never occur to us when we study the documents alone.

While it seems remote that our understanding of the events of the American Revolution will be changed much by a study of the artifacts of that era, our understanding of the meaning these events had for its participants will indeed change. This is probably true for any "turning point" in American history. I suspect, for example, that if the material possessions of the combatants on both sides of the North Carolina Regulation were analyzed, we would find two material cultures in collision, one the older folk or traditional culture, the other, the new market or Georgian culture. Recent students of the Regulation have told us that it was not a confrontation of rich and not-so-rich. But thousands of North Carolina men felt threatened and feared that they were suffocating politically. Perhaps they thought that the source of their discomfort was the newer culture.[22]

The Revolution in Virginia assumes a new dimension when we consider how men in knee breeches and linen shirts who lived in traditional houses arrayed themselves in an evangelical culture against the culture of perriwigs and pilasters. As in Carolina, these were not classes in conflict but cultures, each threatened by the other. And much later on, all those farmers, Pitchfork Ben Tillman and all the rest who nearly made an agrarian revolution in the nineteenth century, liked to be photographed standing in front of log houses, cultural symbols they knew were clearly differenct from the gleaming marble banks that they recognized as the root of everything corrupt in America. It is also no accident that when Pat Robertson and his colleagues on the PTL television show tell you that America has grown weak and corrupt, he and his electronic brethern choose to do so against backdrops of moral virtue and national strengths passed, eighteenth-century Georgian parlors or a Victorian front porch.[23]

Those of us who are in the business of teaching history can find in these and other events material evidence of the values Americans felt were to be won or lost at every stage of our national experience. If we can discover those things, reveal the oppositions, by studying artifacts, then we can, I think, convey in a very powerful way not only the day-to-day experiences of most Americans, but the larger ideological struggles that shaped their perceptions of, and actions toward, each other.

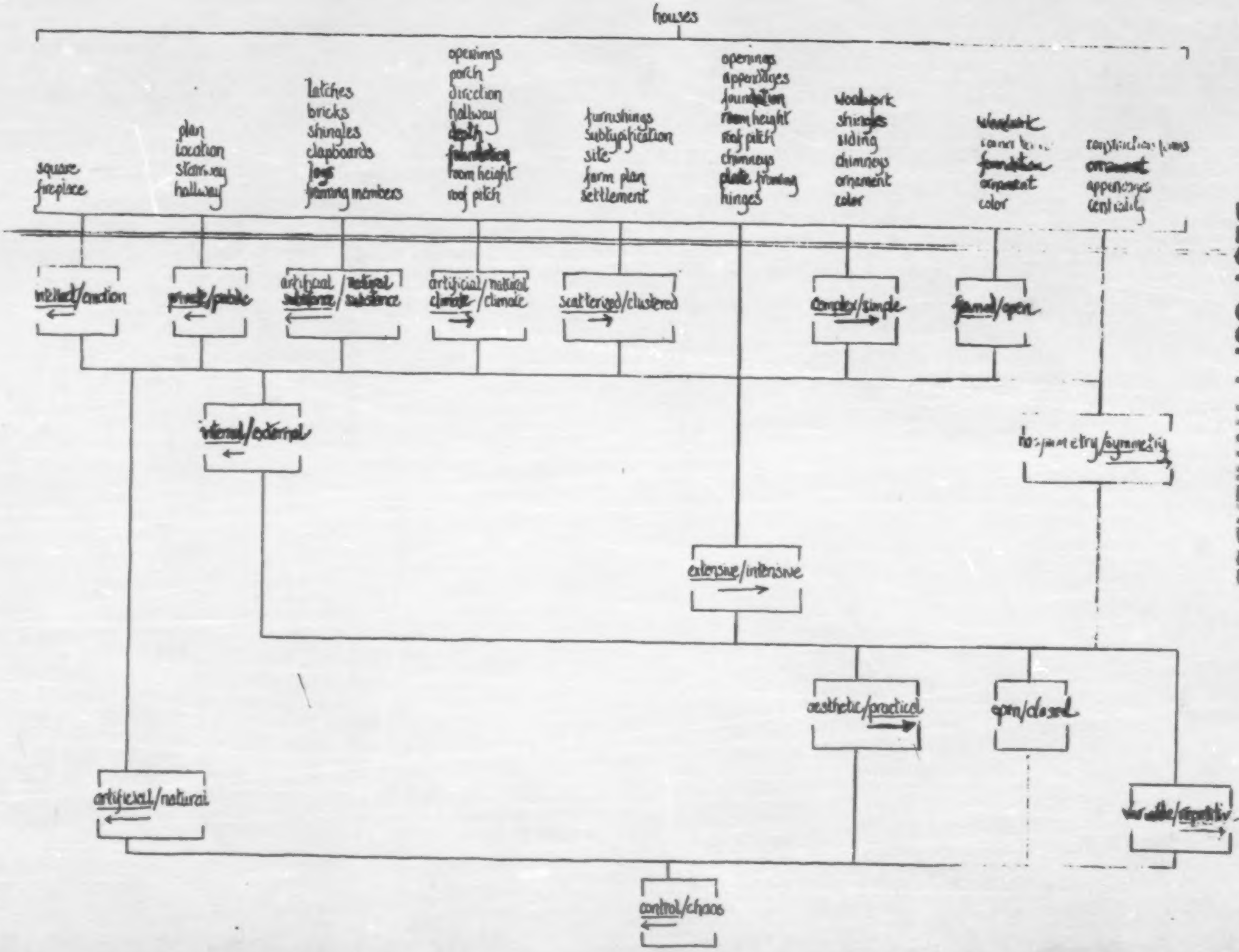

Figure 1: From Glassie, Folk Housing in Middle Virginia

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Notes

1. The papers presented at this symposium have been published as Leland Ferguson, ed., *Historical Archaeology and the Importance of Material Things*, Special Publication Series, Number 2 (The Society for Historical Archaeology, 1977); Leland Ferguson, "Historical Archaeology and the Importance of Material Things," 5-8; James Deetz, "Material Culture and Archaeology-- What's the Difference?", 9-12. The quotation is from Ferguson, "Importance of Material Things," 5.

2. Ferguson was referring to the following literature: Ed Dethlefsen and James Deetz, "Death's Heads, Cherubs, and Willow Trees: Experimental Archaeology in Colonial Cemeteries," *American Antiquity*, 31 (1966), 502-510; Henry Glassie, *Pattern in the Material Folk Culture of the Eastern United States* (Philadelphia, 1971); J.C. Harrington, "Dating Stem Fragments of the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Century Clay Tobacco Pipes," *Quarterly Bulletin* of the Archaeological Society of Virginia, 9 (1954), 6-8: and Stanley South, "Evolution and Horizon as Revealed in Ceramic Analysis in Historical Archaeology," *The Conference on Historic Sites Archaeology Papers*, 6 (1972), 71-116.

3. Ferguson, "Importance of Material Things," 7.

4. (New York, 1977).

5. Deetz, "Material Culture and Archaeology," 10; the definition is refined in *In Small Things Forgotten*, 24.

6. Deetz, "Material Culture and Archaeology," 12.

7. Deetz, *In Small Things Forgotten*, 25.

8. The Carolina Pattern and others are defined by Stanley South, *Method and Theory in Historical Archaeology* (New York, 1977), 83-84.

9. The archaeologist most often identified with this position is Ivor Noel Hume, *Historical Archaeology* (New York, 1974), and *A Guide to Artifacts of Colonial America* (New York, 1969). For a word on the fates and the archaeologist see *All the Best Rubbish* (New York, 1974), 172-210. See also Noel Hume, "Archaeology: Handmaiden to History," *North Carolina Historical Review*, 41 (1964), 214-115. For a word on the political assumptions that underlie historical archaeology, see Noel Hume, "Yesterday, Today, and Tomorrow: A View from the Pit," *Northern Neck of Virginia Historical Magazine*, XXVIII (1978), 3077-3088.

10. James Deetz, "Scientific Humanism and Humanistic Science: A Plea for Paradigmatic Pluralism in Historical Archaeology," unpublished ms., (1981), 1. (Copies available from Museum Reference Center, Publications, Smithsonian Institution, A&I 2235, Washington DC 20560.)

11. *Ibid.*, 3.

12. *Ibid.*, 2.

13. This is not to say that the problems of site biases in historical archaeology have not been addressed, but the number of archaeologists who have taken seriously notice of the limitations of their data are relatively few.

14. Kenneth E. Lewis, "Sampling the Archaeological Frontier: Regional Models and Component Analysis," and Richard F. Carrillo, "Archaeological Variability-- Sociocultural Variability," both in Stanley South, ed., *Research Strategies in Historical Archaeology* (New York, 1977), 151-201, 73-90. If Deetz is correct that these patterns are descriptive and not explanatory devices, the "scientists" are guilty of committing the most serious of the "particularists'" sins: description without explanation.

15. J.C. Harrington, "Archaeology as an Auxiliary Science to American History," *American Antiquity*, 57 (1955), 1121-1130; quote on page 1124.

16. For Deetz's exploration of the mind of the seventeenth century, see *In Small Things Forgotten*; for his more recent research, see Matthew Emerson, "Progress Report of Somerville, California," in Society for Historical Archaeological Newsletter, vol. 14, no. 1, 30-31, and the film "Other People's Garbage," from the Public Broadcasting System series *Odyssey*.

17. Henry Glassie, *Folk Housing in Middle Virginia: A Structural Analysis Of Historic Artifacts* (Knoxville: University of Tennessee, 1976), 20.

18. Deetz, "Scientific Humanism and Humanistic Science," 12.

19. James Deetz, "Material Culture and World View in Colonial Anglo-America," paper delivered to the 41st Conference in Early American History of the Institute of Early American History and Culture, Millersville State College, Millersville PA, May 1, 1981, 5.

20. Glassie, *Folk Housing*, 198-190.

21. Jerome S. Handler and Frederick W. Lange, *Plantation Slavery in Barbados, An Archaeological and Historical Investigation* (Cambridge MA, 1978).

22. On the North Carolina Regulation, see James P. Whittenburg, "Planters, Lawyers, and Merchants Social Change and the Origins of the North Carolina Regulation," *William and Mary Quarterly*, third series, XXXIV (1977), 215-239.

23. For the clash of cultures in revolutionary Virginia, see Rhys Isaac, "Evangelical Revolt: The Baptists' Challenge to the Traditional Order in Virginia, 1755-1775," _William and Mary Quarterly_, third series, XXXI (1974), 345-368; and Isaac, "Preachers and Patriots; Popular Culture and the Revolution in Virginia," in Alfred F. Young, ed., _The American Revolution, Explorations in the History of American Radicalism_ (DeKalb IL, 1976), 125-256.

HISTORY OF TECHNOLOGY

The History of Technology & Material Culture

STEVEN K. HAMP

□

Brooke Hindle, "How Much Is A Piece of the True Cross Worth?"
Material Culture in the Study of American Life (1977)

□

John T. Schlebecker, "The Use of Objects in Historical Research,"
Agricultural History (1977)

□

Eugene Ferguson, "The American-ness of American Technology," *Technology and Culture* (1979)

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The theme of this colloquium, as the title implies, is a discussion of the use of objects in the context of teaching in several specific disciplines. My perspective will be within the institutional framework of a history museum and within the disciplinary area of history of technology. Teaching can take many forms, but, when one thinks of teaching history, this implies the transfer of historical generalizations and abstractions, with emphasis on culture (the human resource) and society (the setting), on people. Objects, as a type of historical document, are, at least to those interested in the potential of material culture study, useful and at times vital in building and illustrating the historical generalizations that tell us about people. An object's appeal then is not so much in the object itself, but in what it may tell us, as researchers and teachers, about the people who made or used it.

The field of history of technology is an exceptional area of history in which to discuss the use of objects, particularly teaching with objects. This is because concepts in technology are often hard to verbalize and understand; they are frequently difficult to visualize. Process and operation in technology are even more difficult to convey in words. This is not only true with teachers and students. Read, as John Schlebecker suggests, any patent claim or engineering specification for content, if you can. Further, mechanicians in the past, as Ferguson and others have pointed out, tended to think visually and tactilely; such nonverbal, three-dimensional conceptualization has proven difficult to convey in language and is something about which we know little. Objects, particularly objects working, can provide visual clarity where books and language fail in these areas.

Before I discuss the three articles assigned to me for this colloquium, let me mention a few general thoughts about material culture and its use in teaching history in a museum. I will return to them when I discuss the articles.

First it is important to distinguish between two broad uses of material culture. A failure to do this causes a lot of confusion and, in my opinion, has contributed to many of the claims and counterclaims about material culture use and validity through the years. One use includes studies and/or practitioners who use material culture for illustration, description, emphasis, example, reinforcement, etc.; in other words, descriptive and illustrative uses for applying generalizations and previous synthesis onto objects from the outside. When I use the term "illustration," I mean to go beyond the normal connotation to Alma Wittlin's idea of illustration in the presence of the real. [1]

The other use includes those studies that use material culture as an analytic base from which to generate new insights and evidence, sometimes evidence about culture; in other words, research focusing directly on objects, developing analysis and synthesis from objects and applying it to people. That use is the most exciting possibility--and the one which material culture enthusiasts generally choose to highlight as representative. But, as Brooke Hindle says, let us be honest and modest about the results. This type of study depends usually on objects in context, objects in a series, and long exposure in the literature and with a particular class of objects. In short, one is a specialist on the topic. This type of study is basically a hard-nosed research effort by experts.

Teaching in museums functions almost exclusively on the first level, that of illustration and description, an entirely valid use of objects. The messages discussed are based on an already determined catalogue of strengths in the museum collections and exhibitions or are based on themes developed in university classes, books, etc. The objects are selected and interpreted to illustrate, augment and visualize the pre-determined themes. This is museum interpretation, well beyond just the object-specific data provided on labels.

Both types of study interrogate the artifact, but one is for example in teaching, the other is for evidence in research. Both ultimately flow together, for eventually new research findings are worked into the teaching format. In our discussions about material culture studies and use, in other words, we frequently tend to confuse the research function with the teaching function. Yet, somehow, in the university, we don't usually make that confusion. Classes go on; research progresses; rarely do the two coincide on a day-to-day level except in upper level research seminars. The current historiographic line proceeds unimpeded by new theories until they are widely published and accepted. Most museum teaching contexts need synthesis beyond the object. If the object(s) can be used to illustrate or verify an already determined generalization or synthesis from whatever data, then this is a valid use and constitutes good museum interpretation. Objects can, as Hindle points out, merely prop up outdated historical conventions; most any document can be edited to do this. But they can also present a dynamic way to illustrate new concepts generated by more recent research efforts.

47

Secondly, by discussing articles such as these, we assume that some practitioners from these various disciplines are interested in object use for teaching and research, and that objects have value in both pursuits. A gathering such as this one indicates that this belief is shared and that we are somewhat beyond the old argument of whether or not one may actually learn something from objects. That argument, old and tiresome by now, cast people into extreme positions-- one pole condemning the folly of object use beyond entertainment and nostalgia, the other sounding as if it possessed the key to the past through objects. As in most discussions of extremes, both tended to overstate the case to the detriment of their particular cause. One manifestation of the injured object enthusiast (myself included) seemed to be the development of the idea of the "field of material culture," a field unto itself, removed from the rest of the historical world of research and teaching.

William Rathje has said, "Material culture is not merely a reflection of human behavior; material culture is a part of human behavior."[2] This is likewise true in relation to other forms of historical documentation. I don't believe there is a "field of material culture." Seeing the mass of objects in existence as a field of study is comparable to saying the field of war correspondence or the field of manuscripts. Today many scholars and teachers view objects as another type of document that may or may not provide insight into the subject one is pursuing or about which one is teaching. It is a form of documentation like others whose primary function is to enlighten us as to trends in, or specific examples of, human behavior. Granted, special skills and long exposure are frequently prerequisites for legitimate use, but the same applies to other documents as well. It is also true, as everyone knows, that artifacts often suffer as evidence, that artifacts, like other forms of documentation, will never answer many of the questions that historians and other scholars and teachers wish to ask. Just because history museums are full of objects does not mean that our primary function is teaching about objects. Rather our function is teaching about history with objects and whatever other forms of documentation are available.

My last set of thoughts brings us closer to the articles in question and to the history of technology. Both material culture studies in general and studies in the history of technology (whether with material culture or not) are at a crossroads. Drawing on ideas discussed by David Hounshell in a recent article, this crossroads might be called the internal/external crossroads.[3] He develops the idea that history of technology grew around studies attempting to answer certain basic internal questions about technology (e.g., the nature of technology and technological change, processes of invention and innovation, the development of interchangeable manufacturing). He cites recent works, for example Smith's Harper's Ferry Armory, that seriously confront questions of a purely mechanical nature, but also move outward into a broader stream of social historical concern. He sees a danger in historians of technology remaining too rooted in internalist questions of mechanics alone, with questions of "technical aspects of technological development rather than its social dimensions." Works such as Smith's, he a historian of technology, as well as works by "outsiders" like A.F.C. Wallace's Rockdale,[4] deal with internal questions, but in the context of a larger social historical frame. These books, while clearly working from an intimate understanding of the nuts and bolts of the particular technologies, inform the reader of the relationship between technology and society at the same time. An understanding of technology is increasingly seen as an important part of the American experience; historians of technology therefore need more studies that in a synthetic way place the important questions in the history of technology within the larger picture of social history. "The major challenge for historians of American technology is synthesis. This synthesis must be one of not only the history of American technology, but, far more difficult, of technology in American history." [5] All of the authors of these articles, in one way or another, call for this same thing, if not in the history of technology in particular, then in terms of material culture.

The same situation, I feel, applies to studies of material culture. Internal studies of the nuts and bolts of particular types of material culture are critical and must precede a larger statement about society. But the challenge for material culture studies, first in research and then in teaching, remains the generation of synthetic statements and generalizations about the society behind the objects. (In a sort of negative generalization, I think this distinction may be one of the differences between the learned antiquarian and the historian. In the former, the object or class of objects remains the all-encompassing goal; in the latter, the people behind the objects are the goal.) We need tight internal studies of the material manifestations of history of technology; we need the same regarding the workings and documentation of all sorts of historical objects-- from machine tools to landscapes. We also need encompassing and therefore sometimes speculative external studies that use our objects to make larger statements.

The teaching function with objects is greatly aided by studies of this latter sort. In fact, it allows us to fulfill what I believe is our major educational mandate-- a concise and available, in other words popular, history of aspects of the American experience for all levels of our public.

Each of my assigned articles is by a historian of technology, but none addresses the topic of this colloquium-- teaching the history of technology with material culture. All authors, however, have had long exposure in or around museums, and have developed their historical careers, at least in part, with studies based on or about material culture. All raise points which relate to the statements I have just made or they provide other insights or examples of teaching use in their content.

Brooke Hindle's "How Much Is A Piece of the True Cross Worth?" is a necessary article. Here finally someone has addressed the thorny problem of association objects, and the emotional appeal they have for visitors to museums. Hindle, in an article which is not about the history of technology at all, considers three groups of people and how each deals with material culture: museum visitors, historians, and the museum staff. Although frequently the bane of existence for curators or teachers who stress typicality and patterns in history, atypical association objects continue to draw the most attention. Hindle notes that there is a deep human need to reach beyond historical abstractions to reality-- "pieces of the true cross." Like medieval relics, George Washington's bed or Lincoln's death chair provide the most direct access to a past only half-real. Such objects concretize history, personalize it in a way that language cannot. Washington's bed as a symbol of past reality can probably be equated with the visiting farmer's wonderment at passing time as he views a DeLaval cream separator he once used, or the forty-year-old's rush of excitement at seeing a pristine 1955 Corvette he once coveted. All of these things touch a personal chord somewhere, one that we as museum people should not overly denigrate because it does not fit a current historiographic frame. Part of the attraction of association objects is that they speak to a historiographic model that was built on "movers and shakers," one with which every former school kid is familiar. Hindle asserts that the "..., need, however, is to reach a three-dimensional embodiment of whatever history we accept."[6] Association objects, he notes, neither confirm nor deny the facts of the person behind the objects, but tend to buttress the conventional history of the moment, in this case, the great man approach to American history.

Part of the frustration museum people feel in the face of association objects is that, unlike most other artifacts, they perpetuate a type of history we would like to move beyond. Most artifacts however can do with concepts what association objects do with great people if properly interpreted. That is, they can cut through the historical abstraction learned in books to the real thing, for example the steam engine and the industrial revolution in America. "The less that contact with a three-dimensional past is available, the less direct and usable is the history to which we appeal."[7] Hindle does not go much beyond this in this part of his article, but he has raised some tough issues that have implications for teaching history with any type of object, not just an association artifact. I shall return to other portions of his work later.

In "The Use of Objects in Historical Research," John T. Schlebecker issues an appeal to historians to make use of objects in research. He cites the familiar abuses continued by historians for failing to consider the object as a valid document. This article belongs in the by now time-honored tradition of museum historians who demand equal time for the object in history. After running through a shopping list of problems with research that ignores the object, he moves into a brief series of specific examples from his own deep exposure to agricutural implements. He closes with comments that begin to reveal the sort of generalizations I referred to earlier and that do provide material for teaching with objects. Using his own prior knowledge of artifacts, he sketches an emerging American style in agricultural equipment that can quickly be escalated to other areas of past American life (love of novelty; serviceability and durability, but only just enough; obsolescence and waste, etc.). He also stresses the learning value of objects if used and handled, two key learning techniques unique to museums.

From the beginning of this fine article, "The American-ness of American Technology," Eugene Ferguson is throwing out generalizations about American technology and its social impact and vice versa. Although specific objects figure little in this paper, the whole thing becomes a teaching vehicle from which concepts can be illustrated by objects (e.g., the cult of efficiency illustrated by the numerous surviving late nineteenth-century labor-saving devices). He has written a short history of motives and themes on American technological development and their relationship to the governing ideas of democracy and capitalism. Although one may question whether his generalizations were generated from the evidence provided by material culture (for there is no evidence of this, and in fact much evidence of literary references), one can certainly re-apply them to museum collections of technological artifacts for illustrative use in teaching and museum interpretation. Like Schlebecker's brief remarks, Ferguson develops an American style in technological development and constantly relates it to the social dimension. The same ideas of expedience and impermanence, novelty and confidence, zeal for mechanization, waste and obsolescence inform his work. Like Hindle's comments about the almost mystical attraction of pieces of the cross, Ferguson brings in the emotional grip and obsessive interest Americans have historically given to their created possessions. Because of the leaps he makes between technology and society, between rampant mechanization and democracy, Ferguson's article provides much fodder for teaching with objects in a museum. He closes with the same note Hounshell sounds: an understanding of American technology is crucial to an understanding of American history, and therefore it is incumbent upon historians to explore the relationship of technology to the rest of American history.

Several of the points raised earlier in this discussion can now be compared to the articles in question. First, with regard to teaching with objects as illustrations, all authors (Ferguson in another article)[8] note the failure of language to deal adequately with objects and process, both in terms of teaching with language and in terms of the maker articulating his thoughts, motives, and methods. All authors hint at the powerful experience available through objects: learning through use, emotional/personal appeal, concrete basis provided for abstractions of people and events. Hindle and Schlebecker move toward the idea of a different sort of learning with objects than can be had by more traditional means: an immediate, primary, unmediated experience, the visual, tactile, sensory quality that is part of exposure to objects. These qualities, led by sheer visual impact, can be confirmed by anyone who has dealt with students or the general public in a museum environment. Outdoor or open-air museums, where a total environment effect is sought, only heighten these learning qualities.

Perhaps paraphrasing Hindle (and I hope not putting words in his mouth), I would like to repeat an earlier statement that was drawn from his work: artifacts, in a teaching and interpretive context, can do with concepts what association objects do with great people. They connect us visually and tactilely with the reality behind the historical abstractions learned in books. The need in museums is to develop interpretive models with objects and concepts that provide the same connection with the past that association objects do by merely existing. The conceptual models, by and large, are drawn from the sort of synthetic statements hinted at by Schlebecker and more fully developed by Ferguson.

One last point needs to be made regarding interpretive uses of artifacts. In this case, again I refer in Hindle's article to a point on which our opinions diverge. Hindle deals with three groups of people and their approaches to objects-- the viewing public, historical scholars and museum staff. About the latter group, he counseled modesty concerning current exhibit aspirations and their teaching potential. He says,"...the danger is that the demand for teaching may lead us to use objects as mere illustrations of interpretations unrelated to material culture. The need is for interpretive exhibits growing out of the study and understanding of material culture." In fairness, he does state that objects may be used to illustrate and illuminate conventional interpretations of history, but believes these should be done sparingly. Such a use of objects would, he implies, use the exhibit medium "... to illustrate historic syntheses derived from the written record alone." This would "... reduce them to the level of illustrative material." Objects should not be viewed, he goes on, "... as simply a different medium for teaching the same lessons already available in books, plays, and movies."[9]

He is looking, in short, for object-use through exhibits that would be based primarily on the second use of material culture to which I referred earlier: analytic studies that generate new evidence about people and processes from the three-dimensional record. I have trouble with this philosophy for two reasons. One, most historical knowledge we possess has not, and perhaps will never, come from objects. If we wait for this material culture millenium to come before we mount our exhibits, then our museums will remain rather bare for a long time. Hindle himself has commented that our gains in these areas have been modest. Further, if we take that philosophy a next step, we begin to condemn and invalidate most historical museum exhibit and interpretive programs. Hindle's goal is a worthy, but, to me, rather unrealistic one.

Two, this sort of approach assumes that in fact most people-- most museum-goers-- do read history books, and in fact do work from a knowledge of current historiography. I think we all know that this is not the case. The educational function of a history museum is, from my perspective, to provide good, accessible, and up-to-date popular history, regardless of from where the concepts are derived or from what data, as long as they are valid and accurate. Museums need to select the messages that can be supported by their collections, granted; this is the result of intensive self-study. But beyond this, the illustration of historical concepts with objects is not only valid, but necessary. The sort of good popular history that museums can teach-- precisely because of their objects-- is available in no other institution in our society for the vast majority of the public.

Second, about the analytical uses and evidence-generating power of material culture, Schlebecker indirectly proposes studies of this sort throughout his article with his statements about objects in research. He implies meaning beyond the things to the people who made and used them. Hindle explicitly calls for this sort of study, as noted earlier. He especially stresses the need for tight internal studies of process to understand the workings of material culture and to understand the sort of intellectual production that results in objects. He also discusses two relatively new models of historical abstraction that hold promise for object-based research in the future: "new" social history and modernization theory.

Third, I don't like the idea of a "field of material culture," because it seems to do the opposite of what it is intended. Instead of incorporating material culture analysis and study into the host of fields it naturally belongs as a document, this reasoning seems to perpetuate the isolation of artifact study and use into a separate camp. Hindle seems to flirt with this idea with statements to the effect that objects should not be used to illustrate conventional history. Objects are a part of history and they are documents; they can, therefore, be used in a variety of ways. But Schlebecker, among others, makes statements that create divisions between history and material culture. For example, at one point in his article, he states that "... all can learn something from objects, just as all can learn something from history."[10]

Finally, with regard to internal/external crossroads in material culture study and the history of technology, Hindle stresses the immediate need of internal studies of all aspects of material culture, but to the end of placing material culture within a larger understanding of history. The same concern about external synthetic works is voiced by both Ferguson and Schlebecker, the former in relationship to studies in the history of technology, the latter in relationship to material culture. Eugene Ferguson nicely sums it up: "It is easy to be distracted by the machines themselves and to overlook the importance of the setting in which American technology has grown and prospered."[11] Both sorts of studies are necessary. It is from them, especially the larger synthetic statements, that we can draw material to teach and interpret history through objects in the history museum.

Notes

1. Alma S. Wittlin, *Museums: In Search of a Usable Future* (Cambridge, MA: M.I.T. Press, 1970).

2. William L. Rathje, "In Praise of Archaeology: Le Projet du Garbage." in *Historical Archaeology and the Importance of Material Things*, edited by Leland Ferguson (Society for Historical Archaeology, Special Publications Number Two, 1977).

3. David A. Hounshell, "Commentary/On the Discipline of the History of Technology," *The Journal of American History*, 67:4 (March 1981).

4. Two good sources that consider the questions of the history of technology within a larger social historical context are Merritt Roe Smith's *Harpers Ferry Armory and the New Technology: The Challenge of Change* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1977) and Anthony F.C. Wallace's *Rockdale: The Growth of an American Village in the Early Industrial Revolution* (New York: W.W.Norton and Company,Inc., 1978).

5. Hounshell, 865.

6. Brooke Hindle, "How Much Is A Piece of the True Cross Worth?" *Material Culture in the Study of American Life*, (1977), 6.

7. *Ibid*., 10.

8. See also, Eugene Ferguson, "The Mind's Eye: Nonverbal Thought in Technology," *Science*, 197:4306 (26 August 1977).
9. Hindle, 20.

10. John T. Schlebecker, "The Use of Objects in Historical Research," *Agricultural History*, (1977), 202.

11. Ferguson, 24.

CULTURAL & HISTORICAL GEOGRAPHY

Interpreting the Lie of the Land: An Uphill Effort

CANDACE TANGORRA MATELIC

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Fred D. Kniffen, "Material Culture in the Geographic Interpretation
of the Landscape," *The Human Mirror* (1974)

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J. B. Jackson, "Learning About Landscapes,"
The Necessity for Ruins and Other Topics (1980)

◆

Darwin Kelsey, "Historical Farms As Models of the Past,"
ALHFAM Annual Proceedings (1975)

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Preparing for this colloquium has been a somewhat traumatic but enlightening experience for me. My initial reaction to the HAL team's request that I analyze three theoretical statements on cultural geography and comment on their broader ramifications for teaching history with material culture was a simple "no." I was not a cultural geographer. As we talked over the request, I realized they already knew this and were interested in my thoughts on the subject from the point of view of open-air museums and living history farms. Fine, this I could handle and get excited about. When it comes to open-air museums and living history farms, I am chiefly interested in the ways in which they communicate to their many publics through interpretive and educational programs. Often I find myself translating historical data into a creative format that will in turn excite visitors, and help them begin to see, rather than merely to look at, objects and spaces, and to question, rather than rotely to accept, information presented about those things. If we are to communicate anything about the past through the material culture which remains or has been restored or re-created in open-air and history museums, we have to help visitors to think about and consciously establish some tangible connections between the collections and re-created spaces and their twentieth-century worlds. I am concerned about this active communication process between museums and visitors for a number of reasons.

First, we are all aware of the limitations and inaccuracies of open-air museums, historic restorations and all re-created historical spaces. I do not need to belabor the point that we do not and cannot ever re-create the past or tell the whole story. But visitors are not so aware or sensitized. Unless we help them to analyze and sort out what they do and do not see, hear, feel, touch and smell during their visit, we feed the nightmare that haunts us as historians and self-respecting, honest and well-meaning professionals-- that image that we are preserving the true cross, life as truly lived, the past or even an ounce of history in our sites and restorations. Perhaps worse, without the communication, we run the risk of creating new myths, fallacies and blatant lies about the past by our silence.

This leads me to the second reason I feel we need to actively communicate with visitors. I don't believe that just viewing objects is enough. This applies to material culture in nearby communities as well as open-air museums. Even in the most conscientious and thoughtful historical restorations or re-creations, I don't think the objects speak loud enough for visitors or students of material culture to hear. We have not developed the visual and sensory skills to be able to engage in productive conversation with objects and landscapes by ourselves. Staff and teachers need to help by beginning to ask questions about what can be seen, felt, heard, smelled. The more active the level of involvement of the learner the better. In my office, I have a diagram of the levels of learning. (It is in the shape of a cone and I call it my "conehead of learning.") That chart describes in percentage terms the relationship between the number of senses involved in an activity and the meaningfulness of that activity. The chart indicates they are directly proportional. No one sense by itself is as effective as a combination. This suggests that we continually seek out creative methods to involve visitors and students in exercises to sharpen visual, sensory and examining skills.

Third, if we can get this far-- presenting material culture in a straightforward honest manner and involve the visitor in active questioning based on his or her own sensory perceptions-- then I think we can begin to go beyond objects to explore meaning and relevance.

As Cary Carson points out in a recent article in Harvard Magazine,[1] that activity is not just a polished up version of old-fashioned pots and pans history and nothing more. Rather we can begin to make sense out of our material culture. To do this, we must clarify our reasons, our point of view, our goals. We must understand an overall purpose and be able to relate, rationalize and justify each object, exhibit or re-created historical space accordingly. Once this happens, we can say that we have helped visitors establish a link with their cultural heritage and begin to understand a sense of place as well as space and time in the larger continuum of historical process and change.

Before discussing my three articles, I think perhaps it would be useful to share some general observations on how open-air museums relate to cultural geography. To begin, the concept of landscape as artifact has been planted in open-air museums, but barely cultivated or harvested. The term "open-air" calls to mind a combination of buildings, objects and open space, an outdoor environment of some sort. Just as buildings establish a contextual setting for artifacts, so too landscape should establish the contextual framework for buildings, which are also artifacts in an open-air museum. I say "should" because to a large extent I don't feel that landscape has been dealt with by open-air museums as well as it deserves. I do not mean to suggest that we are at point one. On the contrary, numerous sites have begun to communicate about cultural landscapes and I will shortly mention a few of these efforts. But I want to suggest three complicating factors that have contributed to our inadequate consideration of the landscape by open-air museums.

The first is the concept of park. In Scandinavia, where the open-air museum was born, the word "park" described an eclectic grouping of buildings, formal exhibits, restaurants and amphitheatres, playgrounds, zoological areas and natural environment that comprised an open-air museum. The word was consciously used to connote the enjoyable experience visitors could expect. Throughout Europe, as these institutions developed, this park concept was considered in combination with historical concerns. It has only been quite recently that "parks" consisting of primarily natural environment appeared in Europe, notably in Britain. In the United States, we find a large network of natural parks developed and administered by the national government before the majority of open-air museums appear. The movement spread quickly to the grass roots level and rare is the American community today without some type of park space. This American concept of park came with psychological overtones of tranquility, peace, enjoyment, community order and respect for nature. They all say "good." It is no wonder that open-air museums consciously or unconsciously developed along similar lines-- with manicured paths, trimmed lawns and general park-like pristineness.

It is not surprising that Old Sturbridge Village staff had such a difficult time when it stopped mowing the green. The park influence may also explain why that staff was not allowed to cut down some of the trees on the site, even after consulting with a respected cultural geographer and producing documentary historical evidence of the appropriateness of land clearing for the site's time and place. As other open-air museums attempt to correct their cultural landscapes, I think pressure from the public and trustees to maintain the status quo will ease. However, parks have helped open-air museum visitors to block out many necessary twentieth-century intrusions like signage, restrooms, entrance facilities, waste containers.

One other factor that may have influenced the slow development of cultural landscapes at open-air museums is the sheer variety of those museums in their size, shape and thematic purposes. They have often grown up in vacuums, only recently discovering one another through professional organizations like the American Association for State and Local History and the Association of Living Historical Farms and Agricultural Museums. The type of preservation at the site also contributes to this confusion. There are such differences in approach to original structures on original sites, restored or partially restored buildings, representative or totally re-created site. Collections of individual buildings brought to a site from a county or region call for yet another treatment.

At an open-air museum like Greenfield Village, the total 260 acres is divided into seven thematic zone areas. Each of these zones, as well as each individual structure within a zone, requires separate treatment in terms of surrounding landscape. It is a mind-boggling challenge, which is why it has not been completed. Actually, as early as 1929, when Henry Ford built Greenfield Village, he thought it necessary to transport seven train car loads of New Jersey topsoil to surround the site of Thomas Edison's Menlo Park Laboratory.

Living historical farms, by their very nature (that's not a pun), come close to interpreting cultural landscape. Because their staffs work the land and follow a seasonal calendar of activities that approximates as closely as possible a historical sequence, they are continually and directly influenced by changing seasons, weather and available technology. Interpreters can help visitors understand how big an acre of land is by pointing out visual landmarks. Field patterns and farmstead layout are an integral part of an on-going interpretation.

Other sites use landscape as a physical and psychological barrier to help to clarify or purify the visual message to visitors. At the Homeplace, in Golden Pond, Kentucky, visitors see only an earth-sheltered orientation building from the parking lot. Once inside the site, the parking lot disappears. At numerous European and American sites, visitors walk through wooded areas,almost as time tunnels, to physically separate and mentally organize groups of related structures. At Living History Farms, in Des Moines, Iowa, and St. Mary's City, Maryland, this approach helps visitors to compare change and technological development through a series of chronological farmsteads. Old World Wisconsin, outside Milwaukee, presents a series of farmsteads in this same manner which compare traditional ethnic cultures and their American assimilation.

Finally, open-air museums have begun to explore issues of cultural geography through formal exhibits supplementing on-site experience. I'll mention two examples. At Old Sturbridge Village, a recent exhibit on landscape included a variety of pictorial material from its collections. And Living History Farms has housed an exhibit on soil conservation in an earth-sheltered dome building.

With this introduction to the current treatment of cultural landscape by open-air museums and living history farms and my own personal concerns about teaching history with material culture at such institutions, I will proceed to the articles.

Fred Kniffen first discusses the role of culture for the geographer as a means to understanding the landscape. He agrees that the geographer deserves a better place among behavioral scientists because of his increasing interest in the psychological aspects of culture as they motivate behavior with respect to the land. Through an example of changing settlement patterns in a prairie region of southwestern Louisiana, Kniffen outlines how a cultural geographer can gain an understanding of an area by examining the material evidence of man's occupance. For instance, one can sort settlement forms, such as houses, fields, roads, and towns, into categories to determine cultural influence and a sequence of change. He points out that cultural geographers employ an evidential approach to their study. There is a logical sequence in categorizing or studying any body of material things beginning with man's basic animal needs and functions-- food, shelter, communication, water-- then expanding to consider culturally acquired traits such as religion, government and recreation.

Kniffen's major point is that we must consider material evidence before discerning subjective values rather than the other way around. He believes, with Henry Glassie, that the material culture holds the key to a correct interpretation of landscape.

At first reading, it seemed unnecessary and just too simple to reiterate a plea to first consider material culture to tonight's group already concerned about the subject. And yet, to hark back to my introductory remarks about preparing for this colloquium as a traumatic and enlightening experience, it was during a rereading of this article that I recalled to my horror that I addressed the concerns of cultural geography every day-- in my work with living history farms and open-air museums, my strong visual orientation, my painting and photographing of landscapes and my sometimes blind obsession to organize the space around me. All this, and I had never connected the process with the formal school of thought! Well, as one who is driven to constant overwork by unrealistic goals and insatiable energy, the guilt from this revelation was like a slap in the face. I can tell you that this was indeed a humbling experience. It took days to find the courage to go on to the other two articles.

Kniffen makes a second point that has some usefulness for teaching history with material culture. He notes that the logic of starting with basic human needs of food, clothing, shelter, communication is very sound because these are effective starting points to relate any re-created site to any visitor, regardless of race, class, regional background or special interest. By establishing a common human needs denominator with visitors or students, it is easy to discuss social ramifications of change in the broader American experience and more difficult conceptual topics such as values, beliefs, and interaction with fellow humans.

In "Learning About Landscapes," J.B.Jackson begins with a fascinating discussion of the overlooked educational purpose of tourism and the contribution it has made not only to the discovery of the world, but also to our way of interpreting it. He suggests that the rise of tourism four centuries ago marked the beginning of a new and much closer relationship between people and their landscapes. He cites Michel de Montaigne's writings of 1770 which suggest that the motives for travel were more than religious pilgrimages or pure geographical exploration. Rather the motive was greater self-awareness, an exercise to produce a clarity in judgement of ourselves and others. Jackson describes the sharpness of those early travelers' sensory responses to the world and suggests that these sensations had, and still have, much to do with the way we judge a landscape. They provide the emotional dimension which gives memories lasting meaning. Because sensory responses are not quantifiable, scholarly descriptions omit them as evidence.

For Jackson, "tourist" refers not to the modern, all-expense-paid traveler, but rather to the lone individual, the inexperienced outsider whose urge to be assimilated, when combined with an incessant search for famous landmarks, made him highly conscious of the peculiar characteristics of a place and its inhabitants. Sooner or later he ventured beyond the guidebook itinerary and discovered connections to his own experience in the every day working spaces. J.B. Jackson has been such a tourist.

Jackson's connection between tourism and landscape studies is intentional. In fact, he refers to landscape studies as a different phase of tourism as he traces the changes in attitude toward travel with the advent of automobiles. In the late nineteenth and early twentieth century throughout Europe, industrialization and urbanization were perceived as threats to the landscape and to associated traditional values, such as ancestral attachment to the land. Landscape was perceived as a cultural heritage that at all costs must be preserved intact. While no longer widely held, that view did open our eyes to the value of the vernacular culture of all nations.

Jackson, like Kniffen, links landscapes to basic human needs, reminding us that they provide a sense of belonging and should be shared with others. Suggesting that the search for sensory experience in the world is the most reliable source of self-knowledge, he states that a landscape should establish bonds between people, bonds of language, manners of the same kind of work and leisure. Above all, a landscape should contain the kind of spatial organization which fosters such experiences and relationships-- spaces for coming together, for celebration, for solitude, spaces that never change and are always as memory depicted them.

Jackson's observations about landscapes are valuable for all aspects of teaching history with material culture. For me, his discussions of tourism and the development of sensory perception were particularly relevant. This article helped subdue my qualms about my lack of professional training as a cultural geographer. I realized that I too had faithfully subscribed to Jackson's school of landscape study through rigorous travel to open-air museums and monuments both abroad and in North America. Ah, enlightenment! I discovered I was not alone in by obsession to visit and revisit many times these places, meticulously recording on film and paper my impressions of content, communication and change. This kind of study has a direct relationship to understanding visitors and students of material culture and their subconscious motives for coming to our doorsteps. I would even suggest that we need to be more sympathetic toward our modern tourists-- group tours and all.

In Darwin Kelsey's article, "Historical Farms as Models of the Past," he attempts to define living historical farms in terms useful to discussions in the field of open-air musuems. Beginning with an examination of living historical farms as described by John Schlebecker and Gale Peterson,[2] Kelsey suggests that farms are often preserved because of a particular association or unusual feature. In contrast, "typical" farms are not valued for their own sake, but because they can be used to illustrate or study farm characteristics that are more general, representative of phenomena in an area at a given time. He also defines the "not quite farm" as those institutions that have called themselves living history farms, but that he would describe more accurately as zoos, parks, arboreteums, gardens or experimental stations.

Kelsey cites anachronisms, such as drinking fountains, visible maintenance staff in modern garb with modern tools, exhibits of agricultural implements to show chronology or regional type lined up in a barn, and discusses how they detract from the credibility and re-created historical environment of living historical farms. He points out that these problems result in part from the museum's failure to clearly specify its identity and goals, or from some inability to pursue those goals with rigor and diligence. Equally as important are common misconceptions in the way we think about living historical farms; they lead to unrealistic expectations about what farms are and what farms can achieve.

Based on James Hexter's description of "history,"[3] Kelsey suggests that historical farms may be thought of as patterned and coherent accounts of the past; they represent an abstraction and simplification of the past. He further proposes that the idea or concept of "model" can be applied in a fruitful way to thinking about farms and historical accounts of them. Models perform a variety of functions.

For instance, models allow a group of phenomena to be visualized for easier comprehension and provide a framework for defining and collecting significant information. Kelsey describes kinds of models and discusses the importance of scale and maintenance of proportional relationships within each. His major point is that historical farms are approximations of their originals, or, more accurately, of our generalizations, hypotheses and theories about them. Like any model, they present selected data and are therefore subjective, and always reflect the particular interests and biases of those who constructed them. As such, they can and should be revised regularly.

As a theory for teaching history with material culture, Kelsey presents an extremely constructive framework for understanding and working with open-air museums and living historical farms. Not only does it help us move on from the guilt syndrome of our inherent shortcomings and limitations to more productive thinking, the model concept also helps us to break out of ruts-- policies and priorities from a previous administration or, perhaps, our own techniques, programs and philosophies. For instance, the question of scale at a living historical farm, especially in beginning a site, has always been a problem. Under Kelsey's model framework, we have the guidelines of proportional ratio to follow; the site can be presented in a size that is manageable for staff and visitors to deal with without sacrificing any individual elements. Of course, as I have mentioned earlier, this situation needs to be communicated to visitors so that they too can begin to comprehend the site as a teaching model.

In the use of cultural geography as a tool for teaching history, we are definitely at the beginning and have a horizon of enriching experiences ahead of us. My assignment for this evening has had a significant effect on my own awareness of cultural geography. I am excited and inspired to pursue the subject further. I hope that I have sparked an ounce of that same excitement in you.

Notes

1. Cary Carson, "Living Museums of Everyman's History," *Harvard Magazine*, (July/August 1981).

2. John Schlebecker and Gale E. Peterson, *Living Historical Farms Handbook* (Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Press, 1972),1.

3. J.H. Hexter, The History Primer (New York: Basic Books, 1971), 4. That book and Robert F. Berkhofer, Jr., *A Behavioral Approach to Historical Analysis* (New York: Free Press, 1969), are regarded by Kelsey as the two most profound books on historical method to appear in recent decades.

SOCIAL HISTORY

Social Historians / Artifacts / Museum Educators

CAROL B. STAPP

John Demos, "The American Family in Past Time," *The American Scholar* (1974)

Laurence Veysey, "The (New) Social History in the Context
of American History," *Reviews in American History* (1979)

Peter Stearns, "Toward a Wider Vision: Trends in Social History,"
The Past Before Us (1980)

The six presenters at this colloquium, convened in order to consider the three-way juxtaposition of historians, artifacts and learners, have been given a double charge: 1) To condense and analyze the theoretical statements as presented in position papers within specific disciplinary categories; and 2) To comment on the broad ramifications of each paper for teaching about history through material culture. After attempting to comply with the first request in reference to the three papers within the category of social history, I will-- with your permission-- turn the second charge somewhat on its head. Rather than commenting on the broad ramifications of each paper for teaching about history through material culture, I beg leave to comment on the broad ramifications of these papers for teaching about artifacts through social history. By way of rationale for taking this liberty, I might say that despite my current affiliation with the university, I am at heart a museum person-- or more exactly, a museum educator-- and I come to social history via the artifact and not vice versa.

But to the first assignment. One of the three articles under the rubric of social history-- the one by John Demos-- exemplifies the sort of synthesis so useful to those outside the field while the other two-- those by Peter Stearns and Laurence Veysey-- offer strikingly different analyses of the state of the art in the field of social history-- one analysis equitable, the other feisty.

"Toward a Wider Vision: Trends in Social History," by Peter Stearns, appeared in 1980. Before Stearns documents the diversity in topics and research methods to be found in the field of social history, he identifies its commonalities-- its vitality, its uncertainty and, above all, its concern for achieving a historical perspective on the everyday activities of ordinary people. History from the bottom up, Stearns summarizes,not only seeks to recapture the experiences and perceptions of ordinary rather than extraordinary actors in the past, but also desires to study this mass of ordinary people in the framework of their daily lives (their families, artifacts, community life, their births and deaths). Beyond these two unifying convictions, Stearns points to both the absence of dominant schools of thought and the lack of specialized journals as contributing factors in the failure of social historians to develop, what he terms, "bridging generalizations" for constructing total social histories. The proliferation of social history topics furthermore reflects a certain haziness of conceptualization. Stearns cites three conceptual models-- social control, hegemonist, and modernization--and in each he detects flaws. Concerning quantification, he advocates a judicious balancing of the countable with the qualitative. In conclusion, Stearns calls for "an increasingly explicit debate over the motors of social behavior,"[1] the development of broad-gauged periodization and the establishment of priorities among causal forces. Throughout the essay, Stearns's tone is measured, his preferences clear but not overweening. In short, Stearns casts an even light over past and current practices in social history.

Not so with Laurence Veysey, who brandishes sardonic characterizations with evident relish. His paper, "The 'New' Social History in the Context of American Historical Writing," was adapted from an essay on historical writing in the United States. Veysey quickly establishes four subdivisions among historians. Historians, according to Veysey, are subdivided by nation or region of globe, by time period, by thematic category (social, political or intellectual), and by cognitive predilection.

Veysey just as quickly dismisses two of the subdivisions-- time period (unimportant) and cognitive predilection (co-opted). He chooses to concentrate on the "exciting contest" among adherents of the three different thematic categories-- social, political and intellectual history. Social history he nominates as the aggressor and acclaims as the victor. But Veysey chastises the "new" political or intellectual historians who try to jump on the social history bandwagon; he finds their distinctive purview perfectly worthy and recommends strongly that they stick to their own kind.

As for social history itself, Veysey mocks its canons, which he defines as follows: the study of the processes affecting the great majority of people, with special attention to the anonymously and the avoidance of literary sources in favor of bare quantitative data. Through two case studies, he demonstrates the vulnerability of quantitative history. In the vigor of critical attacks on quantitative history, however, Veysey discerns a commendable rise in critical standards, matched by an alarming disparity between social historians' capacity to criticize and their capacity to write substantive history. Nonetheless, he ultimately concedes that social historians have indeed provided a sustained look at the bottom layer of society. Moreover, according to Veysey, they have broken deeper ground in their standards of evidence and argument, and, most important, social historians have uncovered more incontestable yet previously unknown facts of major importance in recent years than other categories of historical scholarship. In opposition to these accolades, Veysey faults social history for its fragmentation: "The society, in its overall dimensions as an evolving structure," he contends, "is hardly ever studied."[2] He concludes, in a somewhat wistful vein, by sounding the call for recognition of the internationalism of basic historical processes in the modern world. In other words, he advocates the dissolution of the first of the four subdivisions he mentioned at the outset of the essay-- the subdivision by nation or region of the globe. He wishes to minimalize American uniqueness in light of the global village of social history.

This "new visionary matrix" is distinctly at odds with the American rootedness of "The American Family in Past Time" by John Demos. This classic essay consists of a fast-paced survey of the family from colonial times to 1900. The seventeenth century-- the period of the author's greatest expertise-- receives the most emphasis; the eighteenth century is essentially finessed; and the nineteenth century surveyed by topic rather than through a cohesive thesis. Demos both substantiates and explodes myths about the pre-modern family and brilliantly explicates the genesis of the notion of home as sanctuary in the early nineteenth century. The function of the family unit, family composition, age and gender differentiation and childrearing practices are touched upon swiftly but tellingly. The interaction of ideals and expectations with physical, social and economic realities is demonstrated. Throughout, Demos refers to a dazzlingly broad spectrum of sources: literary (sermons, letters, diaries, novels), legal (court records, apprenticeship papers, deeds), demographic (settlement patterns, household composition, sexual statistics), popular (domestic advice books, childrearing manuals) and artifactual (clothing), among other sources. Despite this impressive array of source material, Demos points out its limited relevance to family groups outside "the historical middle." Gracefully, he both acknowledges the divergent family history of ethnics, blacks and utopians, and posits a "powerful mainstream tradition" which he contends either assimilated, suppressed or outlasted any challenges to its dominance. Demos unabashedly debunks nostaligic fantasies of a "golden age of the family." He urges the study of the family in relation to larger historical processes and proclaims that every historical era gets the family system it needs or deserves. Recognizing the family's dynamic, even reciprocal, relationship with society at large, Demos still conceives of the family as primarily reactive. He concludes by advocating individual modification of, not large scale social intervention in, current patterns of family life.

Now to the second task at hand, as I have redefined it-- the implications of these papers for teaching about artifacts through social history. Demos laments the difficulty of capturing the reality of family life in the past. "Source materials are scattered and fragmentary," he maintains. "The pertinent methodologies are highly complex."[3] We have seen how Demos marshalled an impressive array of sources, including-- albeit cursorily-- artifacts. In all fairness, I must interject that Demos does refer quite extensively to the material culture of family life in his trailblazing A Little Commonwealth: Family Life in Plymouth Colony, published in 1970. This paper, on the American family in the past, like much of social history, suggests to me that the social historian and the museum educator are like westward and eastward railroad lines heading for each other, to be joined together by the golden spike of the artifact. The social historian, as Stearns notes, recognizes the validity of the artifact because material culture provides the framework for the daily lives of ordinary people. Artifacts have come to be viewed by social historians as legitimate, even key, sources.

In conjuring up the image of the meeting of the railroad lines, however, let me add that the museum educator's track is somewhat longer than that of the social historian. Artifacts are the museum educator's raison d'etre: social history is but one resource for illuminating the artifact. Conversely, artifacts are one of many resources the social historian studies for recapturing the past of ordinary folk. A word of caution appears thus to be in order: artifacts, like strictly quantifiable resources, may wax and wane in fashion with social historians. Museum educators need to be cautious about justifying artifact study on the basis of its aptness for social history. The artifact has an authentic claim of its own on our attention-- it is inescapably a "reality." Yes, perhaps just one factor in that larger reality, the capturing of which Demos identifies as social history's raison d'etre, but a "reality" not to be put at risk by a passing fad amongst historians for the artifact as resource.

The museum educator in turn primarily mines social history for information. "It's everything you always wanted to know," I rejoiced to another museum educator/art historian when, as a doctoral candidate in American studies, I encountered social history. The information in social history research enlightens the museum educator in two diametrically opposed ways. First, social history provides information about what is in museum collections. Second, social history provides information about what is not in museum collections.

Let me elaborate. Social history elbows aside the context in which artifacts that have been preserved in museums may have been residing altogether too comfortably for too long. Not to belabor the obvious, but social history purveys a new, improved brand of information-- especially for those of us trained as art historians-- through which to see the artifacts in museum collections. It's as if the power of the lens of our mental eye were increased. At the same time, and of equal importance, social history reveals what has been left out of museum collections, consciously or unconsciously. Museum collections, taken individually and even as a whole, are not, and conceivably cannot be, comprehensive records of the past. The new, improved brand of information that social history disseminates exposes the lacunae in museum collections. Indeed many museum collections parallel the preciousness and complexity that Veysey attributes to intellectual history. His prescription for intellectual history applies equally well to the museum preserving high culture: "To be true to itself, but with a new humility as to the kind of extreme specialization it represents." [4]

In sum, this new, improved brand of information is what the museum educator requires to "thicken" the milieu of the artifact. While the artifact can be exploited by the social historian to fill out the historical characterization of a period, the historical characterization of a period-- based predominately on non-artifactual sources-- fills out the museum educator's understanding of the representativeness of

66

the artifact. Raised consciousness about the everyday lives of ordinary people spurs the museum educator to ascertain if, why, and how the museum collection, like many a history text as social history has proven, offers an incomplete view of the past.

Tentative, assertive, a jostling profusion of focuses and formulations-- the intellectual foment in social history to which Veysey and Stearns bear witness also incites the museum educator to more daring interpretive objectives and tactics. Social history, like museum education, is a field in the state of becoming. Social history's genuine controversies (internal and external) provide a useful model for museum education, militating against received notions and pat strategies. Boisterously critical of itself, recklessly skeptical toward other fields, social history fosters a certain impudence that museum educators might do well to share with their audience-- the public. Inquiry, the questioning of the meaning in the evidence, as Veysey phrases it, can be the leitmotif in encounters between artifacts and the public which are orchestrated by museum educators.

For, as Stearns and Veysey make abundantly clear, the very turmoil in social history betokens strenuous efforts to alter fundamental conceptualizations about the mainsprings of social behavior in the past. The museum educator, possessing the advantage of distance, observes and assesses the conceptual skirmishes, comparing, say, Demos's view of the dominance of "the historical middle's" notion of home with Lizabeth Cohen's argument for the tenaciousness of the working class's idea of home.[5] Social history can provoke museum educators to recast their thinking according to one or another of these conceptualiaations. For instance, for the reinterpretation of the Woodrow Wilson House, Washington, D.C., the fundamental theme chosen treated the house as a totality-- the interplay of public, social, family and service areas, i.e., the house as artifact, rather than the traditional tour with its skipping focus on the decor, memorabilia or biography of the famous occupants. Social history, by celebrating the ordinary and not the extraordinary lives of the past, encouraged a theme which did not produce the "upstairs/ downstairs" syndrome, in which the elite users of the rooms are treated as individuals and the non-elite users of the rooms are regarded as anonymous.

In conclusion, museum educators enjoy the opportunity of applying the sometimes parochial and esoteric output of social historians to the interpretation of artifacts for the mass of ordinary people, whose perceptions and experiences social historians regard as of major consequence.

Notes

1. Peter N. Stearns, "Toward a Wider Vision: Trends in Social History," *The Past Before Us*, (1980),230.

2. Laurence Veysey, "The (New) Social History in the Context of American History," *Reviews in American History*, (1970),5.

3. John Demos, "The American Family in Past Time," *The American Scholar*, (1974),422.

4. Veysey,4.

5. Lizabeth Cohen, "Embellishing a Life of Labor: An Interpretation of the Material Culture of American Working Class Homes, 1885-1915," *Journal of American Culture*, (Spring 1980).

CULTURAL ANTHROPOLOGY / FOLKLIFE

The Folklife Flavor of History: A Sample of Three Opinions

JOHN MICHAEL VLACH

Henry Glassie, "Folk Art," *Folklore and Folklife* (1974)

Henry Glassie, "Meaningful Things and Appropriate Myths:
The Artifact's Place in American Studies," *Prospects* (1977)

Howard W. Marshall, "Folklife and the Rise of American Folk Museums,"
Journal of American Folklore (1977)

Now that American folklorists are apt to refer to their subject with the double-bareled phrase "folklore and folklife," the artifact has taken a prominent place amidst their academic concerns. The discipline of folklore, once considered a sub-field of literary study focusing on obscure balladry and local anecdotes, has since the mid-1960s rapidly asserted its claim over all manner of objects ranging from houses to baskets to *frakturs*. To the extent that these various data which folklorists examine are patterned, formulaic, conservative and traditional, these objects constitute a record of collective human achievement. Put succinctly, the subject of folkloristic inquiry is often the stuff of history. Acknowledging then that there is a shared area of interest between folklorists and historians, there should also be some shared procedures, objectives and insights. The usefulness of folktales and folksongs for historical study has already been conveniently summarized by Richard M. Dorson in his anthology *American Folklore and the Historian*.[1] Indeed, the whole of his career as a Harvard-trained historian proselytizing extensively for the growth of academic folkloristics in the United States serves as a clear example of the hand-and-glove relationship that can exist between the two fields. But what is new to folklore and history-- new in the same sense of being looked at from a fresh perspective-- is the artifact. In the last decade, the literature on material folk culture has bulked large with confident manifestos proclaiming the artifact's validity as subject matter and as a means of gaining insight into the nature of human thought. In a sense the confident declarations made by folklorists have been warning shots that there is a new ship on the horizon bound for the land of the alternative vision of history. These warning shots, however, need not be heard only as attempts to defend a territory, but also can be recognized as salutes to those who would seek passage on the brave ship *Folklore and Folklife*. Three invitations to consider the kind of history available in the study of the artifact have been extended by Henry Glassie of the University of Pennsylvania and Howard Marshall of Kansas State University (formerly of the American Folklife Center). Let us examine the substance of their thinking.

Marshall's evaluation of folklorists' emergent position in the museological realm found in "Folklife and the Rise of American Folk Museums" is a progress report which takes stock of the growth of outdoor museums in the United States. The prime model for a folk museum is sprung from the political and intellectual ferment of nineteenth-century Europe, particularly from the Scandinavian countries. It was there that romantic nationalism was capped by the creation of a set of formal institutions whose main purpose was to preserve and interpret local ethnic legacies. This was done with a combination of conventional static displays and outdoor exhibits of domestic and agricultural buildings. Marshall is quick to point out that there are few museums in this country that were originally planned along the lines of European folklife research. What we have instead are rough approximations of the Scandinavian concept. Living history farms, he points out, come the closest and in some cases are currently realigning their research objectives to conform more with the classic European folklife ideal. This ideal is clearly expressed by Trefor Owen of the Welsh Folk Museum:

> A folk museum represents the life and culture of a nation, illustrating the arts and crafts, and in particular the building crafts, of the complete community, and including in its illustrations the activities of the mind and spirit--speech, drama, dance, and music-- as well as of the land.[2]

Marshall is optimistic that museum personnel at living history farms are strongly committed to a small community focus, to the domestic undercurrents of major national events, to the humane contours of tradition. And, if they are, he suggests, then the living history farms are, like it or not, well down the path toward becoming folk museums. Marshall, borrowing a metaphor from archaeology suggests that the best folk museums are founded on "research excavating down through the curving layers of local history (that) will reveal new data to fill in the hollows in the formal records of fashion, politics and the exotic."[3] The ultimate goal is a revisionist portrait and it is an objective that squares well with the current movement in American social history to write "grass roots" history, to pursue the record of the inarticulate, to understand the plain workaday experiences of the ordinary citizen.

Two other kinds of museums that treat folklife materials are the conventional history museums that have collections of folk artifacts such as the National Museum of American History and the local museums of the converted railway depot variety that serve as neighborhood closets preserving a small community's clutter from extinction. In both cases, the data base of folklife is assembled. It is given a polished treatment in the major downtown museum and a down-home touch in the informal roadside museum. There is much to reflect upon in the perspectives employed by both kinds of institutions, or outfits as Marshall prefers to call them. One wonders, for example, about the attention given to the social context of the artifacts or the accuracy in their ascribed periods of origin. But the bottom line is that the folklife museum movement is small, even if it is possessed of high principles, and folklife scholars need all the friends they can get. Generosity toward those museums that have not yet been struck with folklife fever or that have the symptoms but don't know yet what to call their ailment, is then advised. The artifacts held by these "other" kinds of museums when interpreted with sensitivity to issues of community identity and the role of local tradition within national culture may bring the museum researcher, and possibly the museum-goer, to the same insights as the full-fledged folklife museum. Marshall's main point is that knowledge whether bestowed by professionals on the public or emerging from a local enthusiast's excitement is still worth having.

The business of getting smarter is what education is all about and it is a large and never-ending task. Marshall suggests that within the folklife museum scholars have an excellent format and tool with which to pursue the education of the public. He writes in conclusion to his article: "The promise of these outdoor museums lies in the accuracy of their depictions of regional folk culture and their application of humane thought in presenting history to the general public. With artifacts of material culture as main props in the scene, such impressionistic views of the past may help us understand ourselves as a complex nation."[4] His emphasis on artifacts points out that stuff from the past is indeed the reality of the past, however fragmented it may be. The people are gone, their writings tend to be biased, but their things, whether houses or hatchets, are the same things then and now. Bringing the public into intimate contact with the slivers of reality represented in artifacts should provide them with the opportunity to experience a different reality and one hopes then, via the natural comparative process, to gain insights into their own reality as well.

Henry Glassie, one of the most facile and provocative minds among the material culture troops, has eloquently and passionately asserted the artifact's worth as a subject for academic inquiry. His fervor is partially explained by close to seventy-five years worth of general rejection by American folklorists of the hall-and-parlor houses, whirligigs, corn knives, quilts, stoneware crocks and the like about which many contemporary folklorists are now so glibly conversant. Two essays by Glassie, one a textbook chapter, the other a convoluted harangue to his fellow travelers in American studies, contain some of the formidable theoretical arrows which fill his folklife quiver.

In his textbook chapter entitled "Folk Art," Glassie immediately confronts the ageless and continuing problem of the definition of art. In only his second sentence, he tells us "If a pleasure-giving function predominates, the artifact is called art." In the same paragraph, he moves quickly to solve another tricky riddle," What is folk art?" His answer is that folk things are "esoteric and traditional." Still in the same opening paragraph, Glassie strikes deep into the core question for the study of art and culture, identifying the main goal of scholarly inquiry as the evaluation of the "aesthetic philosophy that governs the selection, production, treatment and use of forms." Hardly bothering to breathe, Glassie brings us face-to-face with a key breakthrough in the study of history through artifacts which is that artifacts are ideas as well as objects. We instantly perceive an artifact's surface reality, but we should, suggests Glassie, push beyond its physical attributes to its abstract and ideational qualities. Located within the object is to be found a deeper, more fundamental reality. That reality is the unconscious logic of culture and it resides not only in the artifact but in the mind of the maker. It is the assertion of human will over Nature's substance that yields material culture, the artifact. This process of transformation is crucial in the creation of culture, in the making of history, and, Glassie adds, is a very powerful process for expressing and shaping human thought.

In the sub-section of his essay which is labeled "Art that is Folk," Glassie illustrates at length how most folk art is imperfect fine art. The so-called works of folk art that usually fill the museum collections, the gallery shelves and the coffee table books are commonly referred to as naive, unsophisticated, primitive, crude, provincial, nonacademic. This litany of denigration may, in fact, be deserved and appropriate in some cases since many folk paintings, for example, actually turn out to be third-rate copies of standardized scences from landscape books. But it is Glassie's main point that once the folk aesthetic, that state of mind from which an artwork is generated, is understood then none of those depricatory adjectives should be used. Folk art is not fine art done poorly. Glassie writes: "...representational folk art is not a failure at illusionary art, it is life European fine art before Giotto and after Cezanne, like most primitive art, abstract. The beginning of Renaissance art was marked by a move from convention to realism. Folk art is characterized constantly by moves from realism to convention."[5] The analyst's prime task then is to come to grips with the nature of folk conventions, to fathom folk culture in its own terms, instead of oohing and aahing over the textures of brush strokes and the distortions of human anatomy.

Having embedded folk art within culture rather than place or personality, Glassie proceeds to show that art is everywhere. This generalization builds upon the notion that all acts of making involve the imposition of an abstract, un-natural order. No object, even if it is purely utilitarian, lacks its humanly determined aspects of form. Consequently, regardless of the modest plainness of a bench or a rake, these objects embody aesthetic propositions as the results of a design process. For the western world, Glassie identifies two essential attributes of aesthetic will, bilateral symmetry and tripartite arrangement. This means that our objects are divided at once into two and three parts. The enigma of being simultaneously odd and even has been solved by fold designers by making things with distinct middles that are flanked on both sides by the same design element. The winged skulls and cherubs found on New England gravestones are good examples of this formula in action, but then so are Georgian houses, transverse crib barns, chairs, automobile grills and hundreds and thousands of things we confront everyday. Because bilateral, tripartite organization is so commonplace in our experience, and so ancient, it has those qualities of being esoteric and traditional which characterize folk things. Glassie then shows that we are all in the sway of a folk aesthetic. It is so deep within us and so affects our judgements that when confronted with it, we can only respond like most informants do when asked to explain their actions in making a tool or singing an old song. They, like us, ask "How would you do it?" Well, it could be done differently, but we know without too much thinking that an asymmetrical lopsided table would certainly look strange, awkward, curious and hence be unacceptable unless we happened to be connoisseurs of the bizarre.

Having trapped his readers into admitting that they too own folk culture, Glassie nudges them to study folk art in a holistic fashion starting with general ideas and concepts and pursuing their utilization through the various stages of an artifact's production and use. This cultural approach leads ultimately to the recognition of the unity of a community's artifacts. Folk works should be studied as a collectivity, as a tradition or movement, rather than as distinct masterpieces or eccentric oddities because they have a single unified intellectual source, the rules in the folk aesthetic. Glassie stresses the word "folk" in folk art because,by-and-large, American folk art has been studied with emphasis mainly on the second half of the phrase. So Glassie, like Marshall, is also concerned with the need for a revised perception of folk artifacts. The artifact is to be prized not as a wierd, charming, cute, quaint or bizarre thing, but for its message of order, control, stability, and continuity, for its civilizing affect on society.

In his essay, "Meaningful Things and Appropriate Myths: The Artifact's Place in American Studies," Glassie demonstrates the broad sweep of his reading, fieldwork, and thinking while exploring how the American landscape has come to bear civilization. This is a soulful piece with many digressions that could lose the uncommitted reader. Glassie violates many of the principles of Strunk and White mainly using many words where few would do. He attempts a kind of poetry, challenging his reader to hang tough while he explores the nature of meaning in American things.

His approach shares many qualities with that of aesthetic antrhopologist Robert Plant Armstrong in that both are often so caught up in their ideas that they play out the subtleties of their thoughts at great length using arcane terminology that may obscure direct comprehension. We find Glassie in this essay wandering off on long discussion of Irish literature, particularly the works of Joyce and Beckett, in his search for a theory of the artifact. If this seems like the long way round, to read Waiting for Godot to understand broad axes and Conestoga wagons, the journey is nevertheless worth the ride.

This essay is chiefly a validation of historical inquiry. History's prime value, says Glassie, resides in what we have already referred to as the reality factor; that is he sees history as not only the record of the past, but as a dynamic force affecting the present and causing the future. History is what was and what is and, barring cataclysm, what will be. History is culturally defined time. If one agrees with this position, one cannot but accept its worth, indeed its crucial position at the center of humanistic endeavor. Rhetorically Glassie poses the scenario that without history society would be non-existent. Thus his earlier criticisms of historiography which he made in his oft-cited book Folk Housing in Middle Virginia are mollified. Glassie admits that he likes history, that his research is historical, and that common cause should be made among humanists because of their mutual interest in historical issues. Having played Peck's bad boy, Glassie wants back into the historiographer's fold.

In this essay, Glassie once again touches upon the need to deal with ideas rather than data. While he places the term "artifact" in his title, he devotes more space to the intellectual underpinnings of historiography, to basic assumptions that apply to biographies of people as well as to biographies of objects. Suggesting that historians do their best work when they deal with mythic concepts, Glassie defines myth as history written in the service of meaning. Meaning entails explanation of large truths, of the big rules of a culture, of powerful concepts that affect lots of people for long periods of time. Rules, concepts, truths and myths are situated in culture, not in events, and since they are in culture, they are facets of humans and only secondarily dimensions of their contexts. Glassie argues then that most history in its pursuit of quantitatively responsible science reads experience backwards, treating surface detail as if it were essence.

Surfaces are a beginning point; they are the details of experience. Glassie suggests that only when human experience is plumbed for its message does worth become apparent. Referring to worth as power, he writes: "That power is accessible only to critics willing to remove the gawdy, brittle skin of folk art and feel for its heart. Once grasped, its slippery beat will convince the critic to confuse no longer complexity with excellence."[6] Should we follow this suggestion, the complex and intricate forms of elite culture will stand as co-equal with the spare and plain forms of folk expression. And both being equally relevant and capable of eloquent communication, a truly democrative historiography becomes possible.

The best shot we have at this goal is to be found, says Glassie, in the landscape. Few people leave revealing, detailed written accounts behind. In fact, Glassie besmirches written documents referring to them as "curious black spots on paper," as "nothing" until the historian has performed his "magic."[7] Such an exercise, he asserts, will be problematic and limited at best. The power of the object as document resides in the fact of its reality, that is the thing that was there at the event under study. It requires no magic to be informed with meaning or mythic capacity. It needs mainly to be witnessed. But strangely, the most revealing artifact is all around us, and because of its pervasiveness, it goes ignored. It is our land, and it holds, promises Glassie, the key to a meaning-laden history.

> Plowing, strip mining, laying brick upon brick in mortar, weeding, bulldozing; these are as much historical acts as scratching a pen over paper. The shapes of fields, the wrecked faces of

> hills, the houses, and bridges, corrals, docks, temples, factories, prisons, switchyards, junkyards, graveyards, the highways on the plains, the paths in the woods-- all are historical texts, overlaid, opposed, related into a single perfect structure, simultaneously spatial and temporal, qualitative, quantitative, as inclusive as the planet, as deep as time itself: a universal memory, a democratic historian's dream.[8]

The land is sculpture under the hand of man, the land is an artifact. Glassie supports this notion with a quote from Irish poet Patrick Kavanaugh:

> I turn the lee-green down
> Gaily now,
> And paint the meadow brown
> With my plow.[9]

To be found in ordinary reality then, in common experience, in mundane work is the eloquence of mythically made material, of man-made meaning, the stuff of history. Glassie's earlier argument that art was everywhere in the environment is restated here as meaning is constantly underfoot if we will but look for it.

But lest we glory too much in the brilliant discover of myth, Glassie warns that myth is a contradictory treasure. It is not constant but contrary. Sprung from human nature, it is complex, variable and comprised of incompatible concepts. Myth sanctions deviance from, as well as compliance with, its charter of order. Folktales reflect mythic concepts by providing simultaneous models for action and passivity. In like manner, ballads describe the glory and the consequences of breaking the law. Proverbs show everyman the ways to get ahead and at the same time the virtues of not rocking the boat. Reality is impure because its mythic base is ambiguous, capable of both constancy and change, of repetition and innovation, of familiarity and novelty. Hence, every age will have its own myth, and every age will have its own history. If we do not accommodate this ever-shifting aspect of history, we run the risk of "reducing ambiguity to one of its elements, purifying complexity into a believable, reassuring lie."[10] A holistic consideration of the landscape should allow us to avoid this problem by revealing all that we have done, both the lovable and the detestable, the full range of human experience.

What is to be made of all these folkloristic observations? For sure, we note that the paradigm of cultural anthropology has profoundly marked current folklife studies of the artifact. Indeed, the word "folklife," signifying the totality of the physical, verbal and spiritual domains of folk society, is a substitute term for the word "culture." It is a term to be employed in backyard anthropology. When folk stuff is analyzed from an anthropological perspective, there is a definite concern for systemic relations, for wholes not isolates, for communities not individuals, for the typical not the eccentric, for real life not fale promise. The ability to place an object into its proper place in a system prevents the analyst from reducing his discovery to mere collectanea, to a trivial, disconnected fact. It allows the scholar to make a stab at the answer to why instead of having to be content with the answer to what. History that probes for why rather than what should prove to be more engaging, more vital, more alive. Even if wrong in its findings, it will provoke, cajole and motivate. Even it it contains a false promise of truth, the dark side of the force, it will still have what Glassie calls mythic power, the power to create, because it seeks after meaning.

This colloquium rides upon an assumption that our world is one filled with many meanings, more than any entire generation of scholars can ever hope to study. But it is also assumed here that all meaning is significant and consequently the meaning of artifacts too is important to consider. Their importance resides not only in the fact that at times they are the onlysurviving source of meaning, but that the kindof message they communicate taps into a saga that has gone untold. If truth be inclusive in nature, holding validity for all the phenomena of a time and place, it can never be fully represented by partial study. A record of the rich is not a people's history, just a rich people's history. Only when the history books are filled with all the voices of history's makers will we approach the history we seek. Sometimes the expanded account does not tell us anything new, but instead reaffirms our old ideas. Glassie, for example, found that poor folk's houses in eighteenth-century Virginia were products of the same mentality as rich folk's houses which had already been pretty thoroughly studied. But his effort was not wated just because he did not ivent the leap from the Medieval to the Renaissance mind for the first time. Finding that diverse people across wide social strata share basic notions of protocol, order and beauty, tells much about what being human means and thus allows us to understand our ancestors and ourselves in a more complete and complex way. From such an exercise we gain confidence and hope, knowing what bonds of experience unite us, knowing where humans are weak and strong, knowing when we have justly deserved praise and when we have earned rebuke. The accurate identification of the proper motives for pride and the proper motives for disgust marks the judgement of a humanely sensitive person. Creating an expanded version of history holds the potential for developing these skills among the populace. This, at least, is the folklife scholars' hope and we believe that the humble artifacts we study have a crucial place in fostering humane judgement based on a larger, more human history.

Notes

1. Richard M. Dorson, *American Folklore and the Historian*

2. Trefer Owen, *Welsh Folk Museum Handbook* (St. Fagans: National Museum of Wales, 1972), 7.

3. Howard W. Marshall, "Folklife and the Rise of American Folk Museums," *Journal of American Folklore*, (1977), 411.

4. Ibid., 413.

5. Henry Glassie, "Folk Art," *Folklore and Folklife* (1974), 266.

6. ____________. "Meaningful Things and Appropriate Myths: The Artifact's Place in American Studies," *Prospects* (1977),37.
7. *Ibid*., 28.

8. *Ibid*., 33.

9. Patrick Kavanaugh, "Ploughman," in *The Complete Poems of Patrick Kavanaugh* edited by Patrick Kavanaugh (New York: The Peter Kavanaugh Hand Press, 1972).

10. Glassie, "Meaningful Things," 42.

The Transcript: Remarks & Discussion

THOMAS J. SCHLERETH & BARNES RIZNIK

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TOM SCHLERETH: We have some new people joining us tonight at this second session of the HAL Colloquium. One of my tasks this evening is to provide a very brief summary of what the six speakers proposed last night in the form of an interpretation of their remarks. Since we also have several people with us this evening who also attended yesterday's session, I hope they will also give their interpretation of my ideas.

Tonight we would like to boil down a bit further last evening's discussion which had as its general objective exploring this important question: What might people in the field of history education-- at various levels and with various constituencies-- do with the various theories that underlie the assorted disciplines that concern themselves with artifacts or material culture as evidence? In this context, John Vlach explored the question in the fields of cultural anthropology and folklife studies. Carol Stapp took up the issue in social history, Barbara Carson in art history, Candace Tangorra Matelic in cultural geography, Steve Hamp in the history of technology, and Carter Hudgins in historical archaeology.

The point of their work was to examine the theoretical premises in each of those fields in order to see what kind of ramifications such premises might have for the teaching of history with material culture. Many of us here tonight work in those specific fields. The HAL planning group chose the six disciplines that we did simply because we felt each used artifacts in some significant way. We selected the assorted articles in each of the six disciplines and asked the presenters to think through the implications of these essays for either research or teaching history. For those of you who have not seen the articles that were proposed to the presenters, copies of the papers are available at the back table.

Our objective in having the six presenters proceed in this fashion was two-fold: 1) To provide us with a quick review of the basic theoretical literature in contemporary material culture studies; and, 2) To stimulate discussion among us this evening as to the ramifications of this work for teaching history with objects. Tonight we hope to continue the conversation that our presenters and their position papers began last evening. Our format was much more structured last night because we had a great deal of territory to try to cover, a number of ideas and topics to put on the agenda. That all took a considerable amount of time. We worked for almost four hours, taking out a brief moment for a bite of supper. Tonight Barnes Riznik and I are charged with commenting on the presentations and facilitating a general discussion among us as to their meaning. We expect that you will get two kinds of interpretations of the presenters' interpretations. Our respective backgrounds and perspectives may give us two different views on the subject-- but I don't anticipate that we are all that separate on the common objective of teaching history effectively. I happened to be here all of last night, but Barnes was busy at the AASLH Council meeting. Unfortunately he was not able to hear all of the presentations. He has had an opportunity to read a few of the essays that were formally prepared before last night, but not all of them.

Our procedure this evening will be quite informal. I will attempt to put forth a brief interpretation of last evening's discussion and papers. Barnes will then propose his thoughts on the subject and on the papers that he has had an opportunity to read. Then we would like your interpretations and critique. We would also like to know, what, if anything, might proceed from this type of gathering. We think that getting history professionals in the academy and the museum together for the purpose of discussing the techniques of history teaching through material culture has been a success in itself. We have thought, however, that other activities should also follow. Perhaps there is much more we could be doing together as a group as well as for and with other colleagues. In any event, we would greatly appreciate your advice as to what future contributions HAL might be able to make to the history education field.

Basically, I have three major reactions to last evening's presentations. My remarks are really three general categories of ideas that seemed to dominate much of the discussion. Let me begin, however, by noting the assumptions on which I sensed much mutual agreement. These would be the underlying (spoken and unspoken) premises which the entire group accepted and, I think, would be willing to declare as "good" about the endeavor of teaching history with an emphasis on material culture evidence. For example, most people seem to be turning to material culture evidence because it is a method that might get at a more populist, more democratic, more proletarian interpretation of the past. Many of us in the academy, greatly influenced by the new social history, are particularly taken with this notion-- one that Carter Hudgins called the "land of the alternative view of history." Many thought that interpreting the contours of that heretofore neglected "land" might be a major teaching objective for anyone interested in using material culture data.

We also had considerable agreement on the basic necessity of an interdisciplinary commitment in doing history with material culture evidence. Most of us had been trained in the humanities or in the arts, but several people argued for the necessity of expanding that interdisciplinary perspective to include work in the social sciences. We all here agreed that learning is of a single piece, not just an isolated disciplinary focus. Using material culture evidence as a teaching strategy would help reinforce this orientation among students and museum visitors. In keeping with the proposal to widen the interdisciplinary focus of our own work beyond cooperation among fields in the arts and humanities, a number argued for using material culture as the appropriate bridge between the humanities and the social sciences.

In this general context, I also heard a number of individuals reflecting on "What is the relationship between past and present?" Is the past actually real? Can it be recaptured in some sort of empirical way? Can that be communicated to students? Or, is the past basically what the present makes it, and that this is what history really entails? There was an interesting tension between these two positions throughout last evening's presentations, and, I think, quite definitely within the assortment of articles we selected as position papers for our discussion. I take it that this is a genuine asset in our work. I, for one, was pleased that we raised so quickly the issue of the connection of past and present. We did not shy away from that crucial but controversial interaction and its relation to museum visitors and students in the history classroom. It may be that material culture evidence could prove to be one useful approach by which to explore further this important relationship.

Another way to think of this tension between past and present is to see the past as either patterns or particulars. I think both perspectives surfaced in the presentations and were found in the position papers. Authors in the social sciences tended to see history in the format of "past as patterns"; humanists often viewed "the past as particulars." At one extreme, we might find ourselves searching (and teaching) for discoverable patterns, real laws of universal human behavior. At the other end of the interpretive spectrum, we find other colleagues interpreting history as simply basic human experience, experience that is more often than not highly individualistic, singular, and even idiosyncratic. Some historians, therefore, try to show people (in classrooms and exhibits) the diversity and singularity of the human endeavor; other historians, working in similar contexts, illustrate the commonality and typicality of human behavior. Patterns and Particulars. What can material culture data contribute to this perennial debate in historical studies? How should history interpretations in the academy and museum deal with this type of evidence when considering these two major philosophies of the past? I think it would be worth discussing this issue further this evening.

A final item on which we all agreed is that material culture history could serve a diverse range of constituencies beyond the museum and the classroom. However, we actually only talked about two constituencies-- the public museum audience (for which Steve Hamp made a strong case) and the graduate or advanced student seminar. We didn't really talk about elementary or secondary school history teaching with artifacts or other institutional contexts for use of such data. I know that we have people who are involved in that enterprise who are with us this evening. Unfortunately we have yet to talk about their work and its relationship to the two institutional constituencies most predominately presented here-- the academy and the museum. I hope, however, that we did recognize that history teaching with material culture assuredly can serve many pedagogical concerns beyond the institutional contexts with which we most frequently associate.

Let me suggest another, diverse yet interrelated, set of reactions to our last evening's work. I found, for instance, that a number of rationales for history teaching with material culture data surfaced. I will put them into several categories borrowed, in part, from the analyses of Steve Hamp, John Vlach, Barbara Carson and Carter Hudgins. Some of our presenters thought that the teaching of history using material culture evidence was an excellent heuristic tool, a valuable didactic technique or pedagogical device. I call this perspective "Professor's History." Many people now teaching traditional, narrative history often want to employ artifacts as illustrations in their attempt to provide an interpretation and understanding of the facts. Here material culture functions as a kind of support system for general historical explanation. It is used to bolster earlier historical research, done mostly from already established and evaluated documentary, statistical, graphic or other traditional sources. An illustration of this approach in book form might be Daniel Boorstin's three-volume study of The Americans. There artifactual evidence is certainly brought to bear, but usually it is not consulted first for its primary evidential power: rather material culture evidence is simply used to support an historical explanation already arrived at by other data. Artifacts are intermingled throughout the text in order to illustrate, not demonstrate, the historical interpretation. I anticipate that many of us lecture in this format when using slides to illuminate our general historical survey courses. One might also argue a middle position in this approach whereby material culture evidence does have some type of co-equality with documentary evidence or other traditional sources. Here I think of Alan Gowan's book Images in American Living: Furniture and Architecture as Cultural Expression.

A third teaching approach might entail using material culture as the main evidential source in either a classroom or museum interpretation. Here the teacher regards artifacts as the primary material out of which an historical interpretation is reconstructed. I suspect we have hardly ever worked at this level. I would certainly be delighted to hear of examples of people who teach history from this pedagogical stance. In this context, I did think of one technique that might be tried. Someone has talked about what their artifact collections might mean if considered (in and of themselves) as primary resources for doing museum history. That is to say, one might attempt investigating museum collections as raw artifactual data brought together at different times and in different ways but reflective of various collectors and the changes brought by various curators over the years.

(Steve Hamp: I think that George Basalla does that sort of thing in his article, "Museums and Technological Utopianism," in Technological Innovation and the Decorative Arts, edited by Ian M.G.Quimby and Polly Anne Earl (Charlottesville: University of Virginia, 1974). As I recall, he looks at such museum collections and attempts to ascertain what types of cultural statements are implicit in their data.)

In addition to the category of "Professor's History," I think we also teach at another level, one I will call "Professional's History." Last evening's presentations also addressed this dimension of history education. "Professional's History" seems to happen most frequently when we are teaching at the graduate level or when we are working together with fellow professional historians or curators. In these learning contexts, a key objective is to attempt to produce methodological innovations and/or new historical interpretations. In this endeavor, we may use material culture evidence as our primary data. As I mentioned before, this type of teaching normally occurs during exhibition brainstorming sessions or in seminars involving advanced undergraduate or graduate students.

In this approach, the objective is to press material culture evidence for additional explanatory power in historical studies. Here material culture evidence is deployed by the historian in order to test already established interpretations for newly argued hypotheses about the past based strictly on documentary or statistical data. This revisionist perspective, a common practive in general historiography, subjects long-accepted historical generalizations (such as the importance of the fall line in American historical geography or the superiority of the nineteenth-century American agricultural machinery) to close scrutiny from another angle and with the aid of different (i.e. material) evidence. I would call this research strategy deliberate revisionism. I also think it is a very effective research and teaching technique. Typical revisions of our understanding of the American past that have been made by comparing material evidence with previously established documentary and statistical data would be James Deetz's rewriting of the cultural history of the American revolutionary period and Merrit Smith's and Robert Howard's reversals of the standard explanation for nineteenth century American technological creativity and progress.

Testing the established historical canons of interpretation on certain points by bringing material evidence into the discussion deserves to be used more extensively in history teaching and museum exhibition. This is, in part, what I think John Vlàch and Carter Hudgins are suggesting in their evaluations of Deetz and of Henry Glassie. In addition to this conscious or deliberate revisionism of the historical establishment's "party line," material culture proponents advocate investigating various gap-sites in the historical record. By gap-sites I mean aspects of the past that historians have not looked at; that is, human activity that has indeed occured in the past but heretofore has not come under the purview of general historians. Is there not a considerable range of potential material culture evidence dealing with a spectrum of human activity that has not yet been examined by historians? Consider data such as mobile homes, adult toys, or gynecological instruments. Careful historical investigation of such material culture evidence may not yield anything in terms of an expanded or enriched explanation. But if we fail to look at such data, we will never know its possible use in history teaching. I do sense among us, however, a commitment to see where such diverse and, largely neglected, artifactual evidence might lead in history education.

I also sense that some of us are eager to turn to material culture data for what might be called hypotheses formation. I realize this is an idea as old as John Dewey's inquiry method. In one sense, I see the nurturing of new historical hypotheses as the pure science of our enterprise. In this endeavor, we attempt to promote among our students, our museum visitors, and ourselves, a learning environment which is one of continual inquiry about the past. Teachers who use material culture as a basis for promoting various question-raising activities and the formulation of new hypotheses in the minds of their students and/or museum visitors sometimes find such data superior to documentary or statistical material in promoting critical questioning by individuals about life as lived in the past. If this initial type of inquiry produces new hypotheses that are worth testing further as part of the work of professional historians, that is a vital by-product of this initial pedagogical activity that first promts historical hypotheses formation.

A final position that I saw people assuming in response to the various uses of the artifact in history teaching was what I would call "Poet's History." This approach uses historical artifacts primarily to evoke personal, sensory (sometimes even extra-sensory) perceptions. The technique entails having people-- teachers, curators, exhibit designers-- deliberately and consciously setting in motion a drama, an experience, primarily to prompt individuals (either singly or in groups) to know or, perhaps better, to feel the past. An individual, visual, tactile, sensory awareness of the past is sought in individuals by a direct experience of life (or artifacts) as lived in the past. Often such teachers of history are also extremely interested in the bases of creativity, how the human mind works, and how objects are made. The interest that they attempt to promote in their classroom students or museum visitors is not so much in the past per se as much as it is in what contemplation of that past might evoke in the present student or visitor's consciousness. In short, Keats contemplating the Grecian urn. Poetry is surely a very valid way of knowing human experience. There is certainly a poetry to the past. Some people (occasionally Henry Glassie) find objects a most effective data to evoke that poetry. That is, believing that large segments of the past are essentially non-rational, intuitive, or emotional, they seek to use data (such as folk art) or other objects to promote an awareness of this dimension of the past. Given this research and teaching strategy, objects are seen as one extremely useful mode of stimulating a type of self-understanding vital to human identity.

Let me conclude with my third group of general ideas that followed out of papers and presenters last night. I'm afraid that this is my least organized category. In my notes, I have labeled the categories "Unresolved Issues, Possible Directions, Teaching Ramifications." One unresolved issue is what we should call what we do with objects in history teaching. What should we call the objects? Does it matter if this evidence has or has not a specific nomenclature? My preference is that we term objects from the past as material culture. I would argue for this designation because of its origins in anthropology, and because the term implies the presence of culture behind the material culture. I must admit that is what I am primarily intrigued with in using material culture in historical research and teaching; that is, I am more intrigued with the past of human culture than with the simple knowledge of human artifacts. Ultimately, I would venture, we are going to need some definition of terms if this type of historical inquiry is to proceed as a significant research and teaching strategy in the future.

A second unresolved issue is what this movement will become. Steve Hamp hoped that it would not become a distinctive field. He was quite explicit about that, but I noticed that he did not draw any response one way or another on the question. Perhaps what we are doing individually in our classrooms and in our institutions may be at present something of an informal movement to interject greater use of physical evidence into historical studies. Perhaps what we are about collectively is merely a perspective or an emphasis that is slowly infiltrating a number of disciplines other than those (art history, history of technology, archaeology) where it first originated. Perhaps certain aspects of material culture studies in historical teaching are one wave of the future. Perhaps it is simply a contemporary thing. Fifteen years ago I had no idea I would be doing research in the way in which I am currently teaching and writing. Perhaps in another fifteen years we will all be doing our work quite differently. I would like to hear your forecasts for our future.

Many of us are hopeful about the future of this type of history teaching no matter what its specific direction. That idea certainly emerged from last night's work. To quote from only a select few of last evening's presentations, we were told that we were "potentially on the verge of a breakthrough" (Barbara Carson); that we were working in a field and a time of "great expectancy" (Candace Tangorra Matelic); and that we should anticipate "high aspirations for the possibility of innovative new work." (Carter Hudgins) I thought most of our speakers shared a sense of urgency and hopefulness. None seemed distraught or in despair about the enormous task in front of us. No one felt that the enterprise was not worth pursuing. Exactly what the enterprise is, however, was subject to discussion. I hope that is something we can explore much more in a moment. I am especially interested in how we think of ourselves and if we do anything differently as history teachers because we are also committed to the use of material culture evidence (where it is appropriate) in historical explanation.

Perhaps we are entering a new stage in our enterprise. I like Barbara Carson's analysis (which I have used before in explaining the American material culture movement to others) of comparing the endeavor of using material culture as a historical artifact to the development of the natural history movement in this country. In the eighteenth century there had been laborers such as C.W. Peale who were primarily collectors of artifacts. This phase of material culture history has, understandably, continued (and must continue) into our own time. In the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, people began to develop skills for detailed descriptions and typologies of artifacts. I think perhaps the epitome of this phase of the movement might be represented by the work of Charles Montgomery. Since the Second World War, an increasing number of individuals have begun to move beyond collecting and description into the historical analyses of material culture. Perhaps that's where the movement is at present. Maybe we are on the verge of doing intellectually rigorous historical artifactual data. Perhaps that has been the history of material culture history: collecting, description, and, I hope, now some beginning ventures into analysis and interpretation.

In brief, we have entered a very crucial stage. Either our approach will yield some expansion of traditional historical explanation and thereby provide a new contribution to historical method or we will find it inadequate and wanting. We will have to say that was a good try but that the approach failed to be a significant contribution to historical studies and historical teaching. Several people, Carol Stapp for one, saw the current debate in material culture studies and social history over standards and evidence as a part of this new analytical era. She felt that the concern over the representativeness of evidence was a characteristic of a current methodological ferment. I think this is so. I take it to be a good thing and something not to be extensively fretted about since I see this type of intellectual agitation as an excellent basis for good teaching. I am persuaded that a debate over theory and practice, methods and definitions, evidence and meaning helps individuals learn how to be their own historians, which I see as one of my prime objectives as a teaching historian.

Related to this issue of methodological ferment and its use as a pedagogical tool, I would take one final quote from Barbara Carson's last paragraph. Here she proposed something that seemed worthwhile to consider as the future goal of this meeting and perhaps the entire HAL project. She urges us to seek "guidelines for responsible speculation about the historical value of the artifact." I think that's another way of saying we should enter the age of analysis in dealing with material culture.

I heartily agree. I think that we have now had quite enough number of manifestoes that proclaim that material culture history is worth doing. We must now evaluate how it can potentially expand historical explanation. In this context, I would like to see someone assess what they see as the limitations of artifact study.

We pressed this a bit in some of the presentations last evening, but I still think we need a critical and rigorous assessment. Material culture evidence obviously can only do so much in historical explanations. At the same time that we are trying to press it as to all that it can do, let us keep firmly in mind its many limitations and what it simply cannot do in promoting historical understanding.

I would put issues such as these on our agenda this evening. My typology of "professors, professionals and poets" history is, of course, only a heuristic device for the purposes of our discussion. I hope, however, it prompts some debate as to the future role of material culture in history teaching.

BARNES RIZNIK: Tom said it correctly when he said that I was really deaf to last night by my absence. I apologize to those of you who were presenters that I was not here to hear. But I did review the papers that three of you prepared and I've had a chance to read some of the articles under discussion.

I think we've got a good case study right here in Colonial Williamsburg. I think it's fair to say that reconstructed Colonial Williamsburg is certainly one of the most popular and well-known expressions of American material culture that this population has been exposed to, has seen, heard about, has felt, for the last fifty years. So, I think in talking about teaching from objects and learning from material culture, all of us need to take special note of what we can learn from Colonial Williamsburg. What can you learn from its buildings? What can you learn from its many small objects? One of the questions that probably hasn't been discussed enough, at least in front of other historical agency people, by Colonial Williamsburg, is this: What has been the visitors response to this place as a physical environment? There may be that data available, but it's an article about Williamsburg that I haven't seen.

I've been a visitor to Colonial Williamsburg since I was a child. And I suppose that many of you are also making repeat visits that may have been separated by, not only a number of years, but by a number of stages in your lives. I questioned whether it may be appropriate to discuss, and I've decided to do it. Tonight I am going to share some reactions I've had since first coming here at age six.

I have very, very vivid memories of having been here at the age of six for a summer. My mother and father in their early thirties were practicing journalists. The Depression was just over and my mother landed a job here in the research department. I think that she was doing more public relations work, but people in the research department understand that. She was here for about a year. My father was in Manhattan working. My summer vacation was to come down here. I have recollections of course of some people. But mostly, from those years, I have always had a sense of place about Colonial Williamsburg. Now I have, as we all do, developed feelings about place in many different parts of our country--where I live, where I work, where I travel. Today I feel as strongly about College Hill in Providence or Beacon Hill in Boston as I do about Colonial Williamsburg. But, for me at age six, I developed a special sense of place about being here. Where did I develop that from? I'm not conscious that someone led me around by the hand. In fact, the absence of vehicular traffic on the Duke of Gloucester Street is one of the things that I remember-- I could walk alone. And as someone who was growing up in Manhattan, that was pretty interesting to me. At age six, I could take a walk alone; I hadn't been allowed to do that yet in Greenwich Village. My parents would say, "So long, Barnes."

I remember walking. I remember textures. I remember building materials. Now mind you, I was growing up in the Village, one of the last nineteenth century communities in Manhattan. What was different about Colonial Williamsburg? I remember that I doped it out.It was more uniform. Also there were no fire escapes. Building forms-- the magazine, the powder house. What a building! I remember the form. I remember the shape. I remember the brick and I remember uses of some of the buildings. I remember people using special objects.

We lived in John Blair Kitchen, because Helen and Orin Bullock were on the staff here. They were in the midst of wrapping up the Williamsburg cookbook. We lived with Helen Bullock while she tested recipes doing fireplace cooking. Talk about spoiling a kid at six at Colonial Williamsburg! I'm one of them. That was some experience. I can still make veal birds and remember how long it took people to make veal birds. Hammering out veal so it was nice and thin. Flouring it. Taking the time to roll it. And how many veal birds you need to make to feed six people. And then how quickly you could eat them. These are all things that I didn't learn at Old Sturbridge Village. I knew that before I went to work there.

These are just a few of the things that easily come to mind. Sure I was a privileged kid in terms of having a mother on the staff; but other children have gained similar impressions too. You yourself must have gained some impressions when you were not yet twelve.

I know that I came-- and I think this comes from having very liberal parents-- and that I was a very verbal kid. I kept asking, "Where do the blacks live?" Except at that time we called them "colored." I asked, not meaning historical, but rather right then, in 1937, in Colonial Williamsburg. Everyone, as they left work at the then brand new Goodwin Building, used to walk down the Duke of Gloucester Street and go home. Everyone expect the colored people who used to go someplace else. Fueling this curiosity was a somewhat liberal antagonism that existed in our family, especially with my mother. She would ask,ignoring southern tradition, "Why is it that the colored people get off the sidewalks when I walk down?" Well, I can recall various other white women telling her that it was because they get off the street for women, not because my mother was white. My mother said, "I'm not buying that." Now those are folk legends in our family. That that gets repeated more than once becomes a folk legend. But it did take the form of asking a question and of course that's the kind of question that takes, becomes a part of a popular look at Colonial Williamsburg over the years. Okay.

Scene Two. Twenty years go by. I'm in college and I come to visit Colonial Williamsburg as a history student. I of course go to look at Blair Kitchen. I'm very disoriented. It takes me a while and in fact I may not have seen it on that trip. Anyway, I was looking for it. I was struck by the completeness of the material culture. I was aware from comments by people like Howard Briedenbaugh in Berkeley who would say: "You want to make a distinction between completeness and accuracy. Colonial Williamsburg is very complete, but you know that not all those buildings are accurate. They have had to use some other plans. And some are supposed to be of a certain age, but they're actually using plans." They were refering to the Capitol of course.

I was impressed by the richness of the detail, by relationships that existed within the built environment. It was something to me that there was much interest in the American Revolution in Virginia as there was in that part of the country that I had always believed was the Cradle of Liberty-- that is, New York.

I came here as a preservationist, as a professional museum worker, in the 1960s. I was working at Old Sturbridge Village and Ed Alexander then at Williamsburg invited me to see what they were doing here. I agreed. Charles Hosmer's first book Presence of the Past had just come out. In particular, from my work at Sturbridge, where we were concerned with accuracy and authenticity, I remember one of the first things that Ed Alexander said to me. "You know, I first came to work here right after the Second World War. Like everybody else, I thought that we should

87

get these remaining nineteenth-century buildings out of here. I've learned a lot from people like William Sumner Appleton and others. I guess we all do at Colonial Williamsburg. Now I don't see those buildings. In fact, it is very important to have those nineteenth-century buildings remain."

Well, what could be a more honest expression of a preservationist? So I looked at Colonial Williamsburg as preservation and again reinforced all the other thoughts I'd had about it before as an area, an impression of it as an area of preservation. In fact, as the National Trust conference here pointed out, and others have shown too, over the years, it is probably the biggest historic district that we've had up until the very recent past. It is certainly a model for other historic districts and has been a teacher in terms of preservation.

A couple of more thoughts if I may. I guess my next visit to Colonial Williamsburg was quite a few years later. Ed Alexander asked me, as he was always asking people who came down here, "How well do you think we're doing?" Well now, when someone goes through your college, if you're teaching, do you stop and ask how well they think you're doing? In the first place, how would you find out how well the college is doing? By the number of different classrooms? Lectures? Or for that matter, in high school teaching, how many different classrooms do you visit? How much learning do you watch taking place? But when you work in a museum, as I have for a number of years, you do answer. I respected Ed's question. Obviously there was a tension in Colonial Williamsburg as recently as a dozen years ago in three elements certainly that are here as a part of its material culture. First of all there was the increasing attention being paid to archaeology; then the increasing attention being paid to documenting the eighteenth century; now our interest, our complete individual attention on such historical subjects as family composition, child rearing, relationships of physical, social and economic life to social history. That has become an extremely important subject for a great many museums, historic houses, recreated, reconstructed or preserved historical communities. Those are all places where I think social history is particularly relevant. It adds to the complexity of our historical record. John Demos is correct in asking how can we find reality of family life.

When we look at a good many family historic sites, we find home and work environments are often the same. What is the relationship of work to family life? What can our historic houses and their furnishings tell us about the kinds of topics that are of interest to family historians today? Sex role differentiation, concern for child rearing. What is the evidence of the nineteenth-century house that women have structured their own lives when they've been free, or at least freer, to do so. What are the implications of Demos' question: Where can we find the reality of historical family life? By reality, in this context of our group, we are asking, "Where can we find the physical evidence, the material culture, of that family life?" There is a need for much greater research. You can take John Demos' essay and work hard with a staff.

Dennis O'Toole, of this Colonial Williamsburg staff, was saying that 120 hours might be a reasonable length of time necessary to retrain a staff. You might take a couple of dozen hours and work with John Demos' essay in almost any historic house in the United States. But you're raising the questions without answering them. I think we need to look at places where we can find the combination of remaining furnishings, documents, and buildings, if they still exist but certainly their photographs. I'm talking about the history of a home *in situ*, not a history of the reconstructed or re-created home. I'm suggesting that before we reconstruct yet again another home, we should scour the evidence for the *in situ* home and for what those spaces tell us about Demos' questions. You look at William Seale's book, *Tasteful Interlude*, an AASLH publication. You can sit down with that book, that collection of domestic interiors, and ask yourself a great many questions. Yet you realize there's not nearly enough evidence of kitchens, bedrooms, children's spaces. I think social historians, particularly those interested in family histories, need to collect yet again more evidence-- a combination of documentary resources, photos, buildings. How many houses are there in the United States that have a continuous use or furnishings dating back to more than fifty years ago that can still be found? I know of one in Oakland, California, one in Lincoln, Massachusetts and I work in one. I'm sure there are others, but I don't think we have paid nearly enough attention to the history of those houses that have known histories and have known physical histories. The implications of course are that the emphasis will be on the more recent past. The evidence will be more photographic than based on physical inventories. I think the emphasis will also be, and make it possible to be, bicultural and multicultural communities, those communities still intact to be documented. I suspect we have a good deal of work to do just to record and to photograph existing family houses that carry some tradition.

There's an excellent new book called *The History of an English Country House, 1914-1939*, by Leslie Lewis, a woman in England. It is an autobiographical physical history of her childhood home. I commend it to you as something that helps us get a little further toward the use of Demos' questions as they come to us. Those are just some observations on social history and some obvious concerns about the rush to teach social history.

Darwin Kelsey is here tonight. We have authors of papers here! This is getting to be a happening. This is really good. So I want to turn to "Model Farms and Historical Geography." In my mind, in the last dozen years as far as historical farm activity in the United States is concerned, we have broadened our concern for the preservation of the agricultural past. That concern for many years had been limited to buildings, even to certain types of buildings, to tools, and now includes soils, land patterns, drainage, livestock, crops, management practices as part of the preservation of our agricultural history. We have for the most part re-created farms in our effort to put all of these things together. The same decisions were made about many of our historical farms that have been made about our historic sites and periodization would certainly be an extremely significant part of that. Perhaps it's because the farm, as at Old Sturbridge Village, is so closely associated to the periodization of Sturbridge. But it is essentially to preserve and interpret the phenomena existing generally in an area, at a general time. That's well and good. That's very good. That has led to the further refinement, at a place like Sturbridge, of the agricultural changes that came about that caused in fact a relocation of population in terms of commercialization of communities in the early nineteenth century. Development of central villages was, I suppose, as much a part of agricultural growth as they were of industrialization. And, I suspect, agriculture has led the way here too at Colonial Williamsburg. It may yet lead the way in terms of creating and introducing plantation agriculture on a full-scale, an effort which I think is a responsibility of a place like Colonial Williamsburg, if it can do it. But, when you then take Fred Kniffen's article and J.B. Jackson's article and talk about the interpretation of the historical landscape and how man has modified the environment, you are faced with a history of successive changes with land use and successive changes in the practice of agriculture.

From a teaching point of view, for teachers, students and the general visitors, in formal and informal education, I hope that somehow we can bring these two things together. I hope that it is possible to take the best of what historical geographers in their regions have learned about land patterns and changes in agriculture and interpret that along with the recreated or model farm. So that with every model historical agricultural activity you have an interpretation through exhibits, films, publications, or what actually happened and what changes took place after that point in time. I think two things have come out recently that have struck my attention. A whole group of museums in Minnesota, the Walker Art Center, the Minnesota Historical Society, and the Science Museum, put together the history of the Mississippi River. The Humanities Endowment helped with support. I didn't see it so I don't know how well it worked. But I understand that one looked at the river and the changes that the river has brought to the communities along it. From its uppermost parts to its bottom most mouth, the exhibit looked at the river through the eyes of artists and of a great many different kinds of people. They looked at it through film, art and music. One saw a regional history. It's that grouping of cultural geographers that brings together some rather extraordinary disciplines in terms of literature, music, and arts. The focus was really a cultural geography focus, the changing use and life of the river.

Another example that I want to mention is an environmental history of the Dust Bowl, written by Don Worcester and brought out by Oxford Press. If Keith Melder who is here tonight and I were in charge of Smithsonian's Traveling Exhibition Service, we'd probably take Don's book and get it an exhibit in no time. We'd play "Grapes of Wrath" with it every night and get a lot of American literature people talking about it. We would be very careful with our oral history and would find people who were affected by the Dust Bowl and had decided to stay on or to leave. We'd have ourselves a national traveling exhibit based on a new interpretation of the Dust Bowl that would cause people to say, "It can happen again." I think we would take our material culture in the form of film, photographs and a book to Africa. We would take it to any place where the degradation of the soil is causing dust storms and famine to occur.

Those are things that can happen with material culture that I think have real meaning. What I'm pointing out is that we need to make a connection between those past times and the changes and meaning that those changes have for the present. I'm right with Tom with past and present comparisons. I was happy to listen to Richard Rabinowitz's description of the time machine where you start in the present and take off layers of human experience to get at the past. Some museums are able to do that with collections and that's the best thing for them to do. For others it is not. The force of stepping back into Colonial Williamsburg does not and should not be cluttered up with an orientation collection of photographs that shows you before and after, although you do want to get at that at some point. What I'm asking is how do you incorporate that contrast, the past and present, or the present and the past, in some of these historical settings that have been working with historical agriculture.

I read Eugene Ferguson's paper on American technology and liked the idea of working with mechanization as a concept. We know a lot about Oliver Evans. We know a lot about Amos Whittemore, I hope. These are old favorites of ours up in Massachusetts, especially Amos Whittemore, because it is hard to imagine someone making so much small wire and studding it through the back of leather to make hand cards for people to use to make wool. This was mechanized really in the years immediately after the American Revolution. So it's a treat to look at what Ferguson tries to talk to.

I think the history of technology raises some interesting questions as to what really caused such rapid and widespread mechanization in nineteenth century America. Is it a pre-industrial phenomenon? It seems to me that it could be called that. Eugene Ferguson attributes this to a shortage of labor. That's something we've all thought about a lot, if you work with small communities in New England of the late eighteenth century. It still doesn't look like shortage of labor was the answer. So you come back to one of Jim Deetz's hypotheses. You look at mechanization and you say, "Jim Deetz may be right. We ought to look at the adaptive nature of a culture to an environment."

As much as I've worked with history in the traditional sense, it is in the area of technology that I think this hypothesis about the adaptive nature of culture to the environment holds the largest key to unlocking the history of rapid mechanization of technological change.Where have I found it in material evidence? Unlike some of you who have worked with gravestones and ceramics among other things, I have worked some with the development of machinery. I believe there is a pattern in the material record. There is a frequency of artifact type to be found as it sheds some light on the history of mechanization and technology. I think it can help explain pre-industrial mechanization.

Let's look at the harnassing of water power, one of the chief energy resources, and consider the technological changes that took place in the lumbering industry on a small-scale basis within communities, particularly in terms of development of pre-industrial saw mills. Our favorite wool carding mills and machine shops that developed throughout New England in the early nineteenth century are examples of a pattern in the material record that confirms the adaptive nature of American culture to the environment. Not using iron, but continuing to use wood, we adapted the designs of the Industrial Revolution in England, as improved upon in the textile industry and then cotton and woolen industries. And the adoption of water turbines to a more simplified, low-head yield as for the harnassing of water power. I feel I can say, as have others who have worked with patterns, that there is a pattern of material evidence that suggests mechanization was in great part due to the adaptive nature of a culture to the environment. I was struck last year that Old Sturbridge Village decided to install a Swedish made, low-head, high yield, water turbine to help generate electricity for the museum on an IMS grant. It proved it was true of course that that pattern still exists.

I believe you can do the same thing though for irrigation in the arid areas of the United States and western agriculture. In fact, I think you can say the same things as far as the engineering and physical remains and physical use of irrigation systems in Hawaii that accounts for the industrialized form of agriculture that exists today. These are just patterns that you can in fact support. That's been my experience in terms of research that I just wanted to throw into Eugene Ferguson's article and to a few things that Jim Deetz has said.

To conclude, I guess I am interested at some point tonight in asking ourselves how well the AASLH has been doing in terms of serving some of the questions that have been raised here. How well might they proceed in the future? How well has NEH been doing? If it hadn't been for NEH, a good many educators, a good many museum people, and a good many academic historians would not have found the occasion to spend as much time with one another. More time needs to be spent. It used to be three days allotted for an academic historian to be at the museum. What's wrong with a mini-residency? Our state-based programs have humanist-in-residence scholars. Maybe that's what our museums need. That's a topic I'd like to put on the agenda.

DISCUSSION HELD

TOM SCHLERETH: We will now entertain thoughts on our comments this evening. We would also like your comments on last night's presentations for the possibility of expanding the ideas presented in them. We hope for suggestions of ways of improving the presentations and your critique of them. That could be another jumping off point. Let's leave it at that before I put too many things on the agenda.

CLIFFORD CLARK: I wasn't here last night, so I'll just respond to what was said earlier. One of the things that struck me about the material environment, reacting to Barnes' comments and thinking of taking my own little kids through Colonial Williamsburg about five years ago, would be what I call the coercive aspect of material culture. That is the sense that came through so strongly then and still does is the image of the perfect world, with the flowers all in the vases just perfectly, the rooms perfectly arranged, no piles of garbage. I use Colonial Williamsburg only for reasons of illustration. It seems to me it applies to other aspects too since the objects we have continue past their initial period in which they were created and we bring them into a new period and yet they stay with us in a lot of ways. I think this is particularly true with houses.

One thing that I think will be interesting in terms of the new social history being applied to Colonial Williamsburg is that it is still the perfect place. We were talking about the poet's response and tactile image of the environment. Here that image is one of homogeneity, of order stability, cohesiveness-- all projected by the environment that is so perfect. The streets are so nice. Everything is swept and clean. One thing we might consider is this coercive aspect of both the material object and the environment. Not only do we adapt our technology, but we adapt ourselves to it to some extent too.

CARY CARSON: I'll respond to that. You have to recall that this is essentially the charge that Ada Louise Huxtable was throwing around fifteen or twenty years ago. Since then I have grown up and decided that trying to re-create an outdoor history museum's look of the time you are trying to interpret is certainly a goal we ought always to have in front of us. In a sense, material culture is not really the most important thing.

We now know that even if it were possible to restore Colonial Williamsburg to the way we think it really must have looked in the eighteenth century, we would not want to do it-- for preservation reasons, for environmental reasons, for philosophical reasons. It would be wrong in many respects. It seems to me that the thing that is really so compelling about social history as we understand it today is its ideas, the views it lets us have into social systems. And frankly we're all mature enought to really appreciate that. I find that the visitors are too. They can block out the obvious anachronisms, and many of the anacrhonisms that they don't even know about. So long as we are getting through to them with a nice strong message as far as the ideas go, I think we can overlook, and I think they can even more than we can, the piles of garbage that aren't there.

At the same time, I must admit that I wish were able to do some more. I think for example of Upper Canada Village which has some marvelously believable backstreets that are overgrown with weeds and stuff that was obviously being done by the blacksmith three years ago. It may now have small saplings growing up through the spokes. That kind of thing I find really good. But I think that in fact if you want to suspend this belief and that one-- do it in film. It's so much easier to maintain it for the afternoon you shoot it than it is to try to maintain it perpetually here as an outdoor history museum.

CLIFF CLARK: I wasn't meaning to single out Colonial Williamsburg.

CARY CARSON: And I'm not responding in a defensive way. Rather I'm responding on the part of all outdoor history museums against whom that charge can always be laid. I don't know one that really re-creates. So what I'm really saying is that I think that is both an unrealistic goal and not the most important goal for those of us who are interested in teaching history-- social history or any other.

CLIFF CLARK: Yes, but my point was not that you should restore it back, but that the environment is subtly coercive. We need to point out to our students and be more aware ourselves. The classic case is dormitory structures where the dorm has long corridors and vertical entry ways. That affects student behavior in dramatically different ways no matter how they want to behave otherwise. I think the environment does that to us to some extent too. And objects do it to some extent as well. I think an awareness of the coercive aspects of the material object or the environment is something we need to have and share with our students.

TOM SCHLERETH: This raises a point that Barbara Carson told me about when I asked for other disciplinary orientations of scholars who work with material culture evidence. I had requested other researchers whose approaches might be useful to us as historians working in the field of material culture. Barbara suggested the world of environment and social psychology. She recommended people like Edward T. Hall who, as many of you know, has been thinking and writing about the effects of various spatial arrangements upon behavior. I'm afraid that particular disciplinary focus is not represented adequately in our six categories. I anticipate there is some useful work in this particular field and that it would be beneficial to historians interested in working with objects.

RICHARD RABINOWITZ: Well, I think one can find an experiential equivalent of the social history concept. You may try to teach about the social history of the eighteenth century emphasizing disorder and then send people out into an environment that is so well-ordered that you set up a kind of conflict. But I think Cary's basically right. One cannot just make these environments into an experiential equivalent of every idea. On the other hand, what bothers me about outdoor history museums is that they seldom give visitors an avenue to stand apart from the given environment and to pass judgement on that environment. The best time at Old Sturbridge Village was when the grass on the Common began to grow. We discovered that if we just let modern lawn grass grow it doesn't look like an early nineteenth-century Common anymore than if we mowed it to look like a fairway on a golf course. To stand out there when the evidence was wrong and to interpret to visitors why it was wrong was to provide a much more vivid kind of interpretation at Old Sturbridge Village. I think the opportunity still exists, largely in the Museum Education Building there, to give people more opportunity than the re-created environment actually gives. That way the evidence is available to visitors against which they can test their perceptions of the environment.

I think the trouble is that it doesn't happen at Old Sturbridge Village. It doesn't happen to me as a visitor since I've left there. It doesn't happen here. It doesn't happen in most places. We give people the impression that we really do have the knowledge and we should give them as much sense of the kind of uncertainty, give them an angle on the kinds of questions we are addressing. It would be a wonderful thing. I think that's one of the problems of an ordered environment like this.

SUZANNE SCHELL: To reiterate, we were speaking of the power of the artifact. I think the power of the environment is more; it's all encompassing. The average visitor isn't really aware or able to read the full environment to understand what's wrong and what's right about it-- why the grass should be mowed, should not be mowed. Whether it's a plantation that's now turned into a park where I used to work or Alexandria, Virginia that has pseudo-Gatsby's lights and brick pavements when the streets were never paved in the 1780s. It's misleading. Outdoor museums and historic districts have an obligation to interpret what is inaccurate or accurate about its environment.

DENNIS O'TOOLE: One thing you, Tom, said midway through your discourse got me thinking. Maybe we should consider what are the limits of material culture. What is it really good for? When is it ancillary or of perhaps little value? For some reason, that called to mind a conversation with a scholar whom we asked to comment on the Governor's Palace-- refurnishing, reinterpretation, the whole thing.

He asked me what we were after with the new interpretation. So I was rattling on about making the way that life was lived in the building more tangible and accessible to people. Then he said, "You mean that you could have all reproductions in that building and still do your interpretation just as effectively as without them?" Hmmmmm. Now I think that question gets at what it is about things that teaches. Now my answer, off the cuff and I don't know if I would change this tomorrow or not, was "yes," the real thing has to be in there. What people look for-- and I'm talking about a high percentage of people who come to a place like Colonial Williamsburg-- they want to come and not have denied the assumption that that's the real thing. That it's really old. Because if those things aren't really the real thing, nothing is. It's all of us everyman being his own historian and making the past out of whole cloth. What we think it is. There's a suspicion of the written word that is not immediately cast upon the thing which people think is the real thing. That's been kicking around for a long time and a lot of hands have been laid on it. Those people are gone maybe, but the thing is here. And so, I think it gives a resonance to interpretation. Maybe that's not doing justice to the real thing, but I think that in that is the beginning of an answer to the question you raised.

PARTICIPANT: Does anyone know what the visitor reaction was to the decision at Plimoth Plantation a number of years ago to sell off their antiques? Everybody admitted the antiques didn't look right with 300 years of patina in a setting where they were trying to show what things might have looked like only seven years after the landing. How did the visitors react to having the antiques reproduced, filling the site with out and out reproductions? Anybody know?

BARNES RIZNIK: Well having visited it several times while that transition was going on, I can comment some. They offset it with such good interpretation that it caused people for the moment to look beyond what had happened to those objects-- whether the buildings were over-furnished, or, as you say, whether there were pieces that had lost their sense of newness. It was what happened in interpretation that mattered. You can absorb people and get them involved in interpretation very rapidly now. People are expecting to be engaged on some different levels from their comparative experiences of going to different historic sites.

At Plimoth I think, people found so much happening by way of good communication with the visitors, care to involve visitors and to be consistent, and to make visitors feel at home at a different time. The shifting in and out of roles was as shocking as anything else and that probably soaked up some of that other astonishment about where did the collection go.

JOHN VLACH: I think the point we're raising picks up on the twin possibility of reaching the goal of authenticity that we spoke a lot about yesterday-- using artifacts to get a better grasp on the reality of the past, the truth of the past. There are two shots we have at it. One is with the real objects, treating them with as much sensitivity as possible. The other is the real processes, showing use patterns, authenticity in reproducing life experiences can count for as much as getting people to witness and be in the presence of the authentic glass, the authentic table.

TOM SCHLERETH: Would you say the latter happens in the absence of the real things very frequently? Is that the second strategy? Would you want to put it in a rank order?

JOHN VLACH: I think if you could have both it might be better. Although Cary's point that if you're out to show a period and it has 300 years of use on it, then it isn't really showing that period. You obviously set your scenario and go for it in the best way possible.

CANDACE TANGORRA MATELIC: I remember a couple of things happening when I went to Plimoth at that time. For one, the staff took a lot of time and made an effort to explain to visitors that the objects were reproductions and how they got to that point, that they had based their reproductions on historical research of actual objects. I believe that there was come historical precedent. The other was the added dimension of being able to experience those objects which overcame qualms about the "real thing." The visitors were so excited by the teaching that it added a dimension.

PETER O'CONNELL: I've thought about the whole issue of artifacts that survive primarily because they never worked. Until you use them, you don't know that. At Old Sturbridge Village, for instance, I remember the wagon that we reproduced and finally got ready. Big celebration-- and it didn't work! The holiness of the artifact kind of disappeared with that realization. For me as a teacher, a reproduction that you can get close to, that you can use to teach yourself something that cannot be taught in any other way, is extremely curcial and significant. In terms of the papers that were presented, I think that was a serious omission, not to have some reviews of papers about teaching using artifacts for particular audiences. Thinking of how we're using artifacts, I'd say it makes a difference who we're using them with, what you bring to them as to what the artifact can do for you. From a point of view of someone, for instance, who brings a tremendous amount of experience in working with artifacts and an intellectual framework in being able to work with them, the original artifact, even with 300 years of patina, is perhaps still the most important thing. But, to the child who comes, it's probably the reproduction that's the most important thing because he or she can really get to use it and then begin to understand the real thing better.

GEORGE MC DANIELS: In addition to having someone who's been teaching with artifacts, I think it would be really important to have someone who's worked as an interpreter as well, someone who has confronted a lot of these problems very personally. Those people could tell us how they teach with artifacts because they're engaged with that day after day after day. High school teachers and other teachers who are struggling to teach history and to excite his or her students through material culture daily would be good additions too.

TOM SCHLERETH: I suspect we have both of those constituencies represented here, certainly people who have been interpreters or who have trained interpreters, and teachers who have been in the classroom.

PARTICIPANT: Let's compare the more traditional museum environment with an environmental contextual situation, as at Colonial Williamsburg and Old Sturbridge Village. In one you are dealing with process and involvement;in the other, perhaps, you are much more concerned with 300 years of patina and being in the presence of the real object.

PARTICIPANT: I guess that I would say that perhaps even researchers need to use reproductions before they can understand the dimensions of the artifact.

PARTICIPANT: True, I don't mean to limit them to those types of institutions, but perhaps by some reverse logic that's the way they both developed, or at least one of the ways that they evolved.

CANDACE TANGORRA MATELIC: I think the key word, in responding to what Peter O'Connell was saying earlier, is "process." A lot of visitors come to open-air sites for that sense of context. and for the process. I think that's important to remember. Tim Wheeler, formerly of Old Sturbridge, always used to call that "kinetifacts." We collect those processes as much as we do the artifact. Maybe you have the strongest models when you have a combination of artifacts and reproductions backed up by artifacts-- with the added dimension of process. You can begin to make context work. It's not just pure aesthetics. It's something that you can use to begin to address the social history.

TOM SCHLERETH: Could I put this question to us? How would this project best serve people teaching with artifacts? For the moment, in the range of constituencies, part of which we have left out and which we are aware of, from elementary school on through to walk-in visitors to whom we are responsible for the teaching of history and are using artifacts. I'd appreciate suggestions on what would be good follow through. We have thought of some sort of gathering of good theoretical things with professionals commenting on those and their implications for the teaching of history. That is what those six position papers were about. That's going at it from the top, so to speak-- some of the theories at work and where each might go. It is also feasible to go from the bottom, to go from what people have been doing and doing well that should be somehow gathered in a place. Who knows how many items or articles? But we could put them together in some form that people would learn about them. Maybe that's not the best way to proceed. I'd like suggestions.

Or maybe we should do nothing. The folks who are at work in different places keep working as they do. We pick up things from each other, that's for sure. Maybe we're trying to build a constituency that's not really there.

PARTICIPANT: I think it's really valuable how this has gotten people from different orientations together. We've seen how we're each using material culture in teaching both in the museum and in the classroom. Generally we will just talk to our immediate colleagues and not to other people who are involved in similar pursuits in the academy or other places. I think more forums like this, where people from a number of different orientations come together, would be very valuable.

PARTICIPANT: Well, my general interest is in what you might call public history or public involvement in history whether it's in a museum or a television program or whatever. But what I think is very important in this whole aspect is the question of school kids. What opportunities are there in any kind of systematic way for children in grade school or junior high school to do some of these things? It seems to me there's a lot of different museums with programs on an ad hoc basis. It would be interesting to know what really works with third and fifth graders. I see a great need for materials with reproductions that would be suitable for youngsters.

TOM SCHLERETH: You propose some good case studies of what has already worked in some places that could be shared with others?

PARTICIPANT: Yes, and a set of materials that could be used nationally in grades one through three.

TOM SCHLERETH: Well, we can't quite do that. We can give that charge to somebody else. You sense a real pressing need at that level of audience?

PARTICIPANT: Yes, I think that's where you build your audience.

PETER O'CONNELL: I guess I'd move it up a bit. The audience that most of us serve begins at about third grade and goes up from there. In fact, if our museum, Old Sturbridge Village, is at all typical, fully three-quarters of our audience is in the upper elementary grades in terms of school groups visiting. That's a prime audience.

I think the suggestion is good. Not so much for curriculum materials, as for different kinds of strategies with relationships to objects. And frankly, most of the strategies you would use with a fourth grader, you can also use with a tenth grader and a college student and a general visitor. I think that around the objects, the strategies that are used are the same. What differs are the objects that kids will relate to. Perhaps it might be useful to really look at what people notice most. What are the things they're most interested in? Which objects within those topics evoke certain feelings? So that's an amendment. I think the most pressing need is with college faculty myself. I would say that this audience is not the right audience to be speaking to.

TOM SCHLERETH: We're not "speaking to," really. We're "asking."

PETER O'CONNELL: Okay. Again, if you look at museum visitor patterns as any indication, less that two percent of our education audience is college students. Key people in that are the students themselves, but their professors perhaps most importantly. There's a real pressing need to convince people about what they're missing, what's being left out by the failure to get our of the classroom, or by the failure to include objects in the classroom at the very least. So I'd like to see some thought given to that. I think the notion of school groups is an important audience too and I'd like to see strategies collected in one place, but not because they're directed at school groups. People may say, "Well, that's all they're good for." They're not.

RICHARD RABINOWITZ: I think the strategies might be the same, but media are very different. Strategies of working in small groups with one kind of medium that most museums don't have available to them. So there are many different media which can imply different kinds of strategies. Which objects for study in the company of teachers and learners.

Instead of a compendium of excellent examples, which I think we all have some problems with, I'd like to see some vignettes, small case studies. Barnes mentioned problems of interpretation. Let's say you took the interpretation of the 1840s family and went to several different historic sites and you did the kind or reportage that doesn't exist in the field. I remember at Old Sturbridge Village that I used to, and I still now do, a number on soap. It involves two different kinds of soap and the kinds of worlds that each created around it. I used to call it "Soap as a Means of Transportation."

I think it would be valuable to have some others like that written up and then critiqued. The critique is not for the sake of saying, "This person has obviously forgotten all of these important thirty-seven concepts that he or she might have developed. I think that that kind of criticism is really quite useless. But it would build on what, in fact, one learns from seeing examples of how this is done. Those vignettes could be about interpreters working with objects in an outdoor history museum, formal exhibits, media presentations. Within media, there are tremendous differences from the way in which simultaneity works with slides and the way in which film generates a notion of narrative and the way in which video generates a notion of motion.

For instance, there are six different institutions that are trying to deal with, let's say, young women in the 1840s, a subject which a great many museums do try to deal with. The articles need not be thirty pages in length. No one's going to write that. Rather they should be confined to a form in which you could get your story told in two pages. Here's what I tried to do. Here's how I worked with the objects. Here's what about the objects I worked with and here's the visual evidence of it. That would have a compelling power for somebody who was teaching American social history.

But I think the critic is important. I think it's not just some way in which somebody else is watching that process being done or somehow reporting on it. There's a tremendous paucity of professional literature. That would be very useful across professional lines. That's missing.

BARNES RIZNIK: Well just to add to that. There's nothing quite so basic as having academicians spend time at museums or historic sites, in study collections or out in the interpretive area. I just wish there were more historical organizations in the United States that would invite academicians to come as has this institution of Colonial Williamsburg.

A little bit ago, Dennis O'Toole and Cary Carson so casually said that they had someone from the academy come to look at a house. Colonial Williamsburg has been doing this for years. They bring some really outstanding people here on a regular basis. Not just to do research in their own fields, but to look at what's going on. They fortunately have the resources to do that. Most don't. There's got to be a commitment on the part of the institution. Tom knows that, having knocked on some doors himself with his own interests. The work that's going on in terms of university teaching bears directly on the work of the museums where people are using material culture. Some universities in fact are teaching material culture without necessarily having worked with nearby collections. I see this in Hawaii with American studies departments, history departments, ethnic studies and other departments. Inviting them to sites, such as where I work now, gets great response. I think it's very important and the responsibility of historic sites to bring university historians closer to the history museum and site. They're much closer than they were a few years ago.

TOM SCHLERETH: And on strictly pragmatic grounds, I think that the leadership of such a movement would probably have to come from those scholars working at museums and historical agencies. At present, that's certainly where the bulk of material culture collections are located.

GAIL DENNIS: From an interpreter's point of view, I think the one thing that's really needed is to think about how we can assess the visitor's needs and desires. They come to history museums without wanting to learn about history. They come wanting some entertainment or who knows what. I'm never really sure why they're coming. At least in an academic setting, you have students and the range of interest is smaller. In a museum, the range of interests of people coming is much broader. What can you try with people like this? What's going to work? How can you try to assess them as they come in the door to see what kinds of things they will respond to? Obviously it might be impossible, but if you're working with these people, that is what you ought to know before you can put enough energy and information in front of them so they have something to work with?

CANDACE TANGORRA MATELIC: My comment is in response to what Barnes just said and to respond to your initial question, Tom. Do we take it from the top or from the bottom? Maybe we ought to go to the middle level, that level of interpreters, that level of teachers who have worked with material culture. Ask them the same kinds of questions that we have been asked and see what their responses are. They are out there on the front lines with students and visitors, trying to make sense of the concepts we hold so dear and thinking through so thoroughly. I don't think we've done enough of that. I don't think we hear enough of what interpreters on a site have to say. There are a lot of pretty neat people who are thinking as hard as we are.

TOM SCHLERETH: Response to that or other items? I sense so far that at least in the outline I had made in my mind and proposed, that is the methods used in the teaching of material culture, it is the first category, material culture as a didactic tool, a pedagogical device, that from these comments you would think that the project ought to pour more energy. I hear you saying that we should follow that course rather than in working on bringing together my second category of scholars, research teams, people who are trying to see how this evidence might expand historical explanation. Not that that doesn't have a relation to the first, but it's not a perspective that needs an emphasis.

RICHARD RABINOWITZ: I want to say a word in favor of the third category. Last night, Carter Hudgins presented his summary of a Deetz paper. It seemed to me that after adding up all those great changes that occured in New England culture, American culture, at the end of the eighteenth century and early nineteenth century, he said, "This comes to individualism." My heart sank. As an intellectual historian, I don't know what individualism he's talking about. It's a complicated notion. All of those wonderful illustrations don't add up to a philosophical concept of individualism. They add up to something which, if we could present it poetically, could present those transitions in some form.

Now I find myself faced professionally with the challenge of trying to make sense of transitions like that, in objects, without trying to reduce them. I use that word advisedly. There's something to be said for just providing enough evidence and then just trying to do it as artfully as one can. There is a need for more art in our business and a need for more acknowledgement that we don't always have to be teachers. A need that we don't always have to be so heuristic, so didactic, so professional and so pedagogical. There is a tremendous amount of information to be conveyed in the presentation of this material. I guess I would rather see somebody take Jim Deetz's transitions and try hard to put them in some visual form and leave them in a visual form. I think they are material culture and should be communicated in a visual form. As long as you're trying to communicate them in a literary form, through a scholarly article, you are going to end up reducing them. That's just part of the philosophical baggage of this culture. So I really would like to see us relax a little bit, or get more tense and be more artful.

TOM SCHLERETH: I've always though that teaching was an art. You might concur?

CARY CARSON: Oh, I don't know. I don't think Richard should go unresponded to. I'm certainly willing to regard the museum as a place in which different things can happen. History teaching can happen there. An aesthetic experience can happen there. Some sort of poetical "great awakening" can happen there. But let's not confuse. I'm willing to allow the kind of thing that Richard suggests to happen in the museum, but let's not call it history teaching. I think history teaching is cerebral. It is in fact something of the head rather than the heart. I think one can feel history on the way toward understanding it. But a great deal of the rather fuzzy-headed history that we find in museums is touchy-feely history. Stop right there. That never moves on to actually engage the intellect which is where history happens.

TOM SCHLERETH: Well, we could hardly think of a more momentous clash on which to conclude. That, in fact, is what we hoped this informal endeavor would ultimately generate, a spirited intellectual discussion about the significance of teaching history with material culture evidence. This is the reason we pressed each of the presenters to start with some theory that has been produced in the field in hopes that they might prompt further speculation on what such theory might mean in terms of practice. Let me thank them for their willingness to take up this enormous challenge and to initiate us into a productive two days of work. I would also like to thank all of you who immediately joined into the spirit of the colloquium and continually contributed from the floor.

Colonial Williamsburg has been our host throughout these two days and let me thank publicly Dennis O'Toole who has been gracious enough to coordinate all of our logistical requirements. Finally, many thanks to the National Endowment for the Humanities, particularly Cheryl Mc Clenney and her associates, who have believed in the project from the beginning and who have been generous in supporting it both personally and on behalf of the Endowment.

I hope that all of you will continue to keep us abreast of the important work you are about, particularly as it pertains to the teaching of history using material culture. The best way to continue to maintain this informal network would be to keep in correspondence with Susan Nichols, the project's director. We solicit any additional ideas, suggestions for other ways to implement our project aims and, of course, any additional advice you might have for the work of the HAL Project.

Thank you all for coming.

The Recommendations

The HAL staff would like to emphasize that to address the topic of teaching through the use of material culture, artifacts, is understood to be difficult in all the disciplines of the humanities. As Barbara Carson said at the colloquium:

> The problem is that people who are trained verbally have no confidence and few techniques to understand the complex dimensions of artifacts.... For historians, artifact studies, semiotics, and exercises in visual thinking are highly speculative, seemingly incapable of scholarly proof.

The HAL team found that its topic-- teaching history from artifacts or material culture evidence-- has an enthusiastic constituency, but one whose members have hardly begun to think of themselves in those terms. As cultural geographers, art historians, folklorists, teachers who define themselves by traditional disciplines, they have largely overlooked their membership in a community of object-oriented educators.

Many characterize themselves, as did Candace Tangorra Matelic in her paper, as daily confronting the issues of teaching from artifacts without linking those issues to a formal school of thought. The purpose of the HAL project has been to generate and collect resources that can be used to forge those links for history teachers who use material culture evidence in their work. A result of the project has been the precipitation of a constituency of museum people, instructors in secondary and post-secondary educators, curriculum planners and administrators who now feel a sense of community in using artifacts to teach history. The HAL team wants this community to persevere and therefore makes the following recommendations.

Our primary recommendation is that the work of developing and/or compiling a single resource, most likely a publication, be pursued. Several means to this end might be employed. For instance, further analytical papers might be commissioned. Additional topics that might be fruitfully addressed include sub-categories of historical research like popular culture and women's history, at present generating much thought and activity that might well shed a special light on the uses of material culture. Likewise there may be benefits from considering classes of artifacts, like the built environment and garbage, because their relevance to present day value systems has provoked important thinking and some particularly engaging research and teaching programs. Topics in pedagogy, including readings from Dewey and Malcolm Knowles among others, might enlarge the endeavor.

Second, curriculum materials for people who either are, or wish to become, teachers of history using material culture evidence might be developed. Such materials might include the readings and papers the HAL project has collected, plus a guide for checking progress toward a personal style of teaching and using artifacts.

Third, investigation and documentation of teaching practices linked to formal schools of thought is recommended. The HAL team urges some criteria be employed for selecting people and places to document. The following are the basic criteria we would recommend:

> Endorsements from the profession
> The initial identification of programs and practices to be documented depends upon the endorsement of a substantial list of historians, humanists and material culture specialists whose judgements are widely respected. (Such a list is part of the HAL final report to the National Endowment for the Humanities.) It would be difficult otherwise to attempt, or to underwrite financially, a full survey of places and institutions that might be included in the publication. In depending upon this endorsement, the authors/researchers must give over to these endorsers the responsibility for the limits to which the research will be extended. The use of these endorsements would in all probability be pragmatic rather than systematic. That is to say, the criteria for following up on professional endorsements, since more possibilities already have been suggested than can be pursued in any depth, would not be so much a question of how many endorsements constitute a minimum for inclusion, but rather what is the quality of statements made in endorsing a program; or what are the particular insights of an endorser into the thesis of the investigation that might make a single endorsement more compelling than six non-commital ones. Numbers would not be insignificant, but quantity would be only one quality of this criterion.
>
> The ability of the practitioner (teacher, administrator, site interpreter, etc.) to articulate the intent, methodology, and theoretical underpinnings of the teaching practices to be documented.
> The primary reason for this criterion is that, while an on-site observer can certainly verify what the program or practice claims to achieve, it is not appropriate for the observer to make those claims. A secondary reason for imposing this criterion is that, without doubt, the person responsible for a program that is published will be invited to make further presentations about the work, the theory and the methodology, and should be able to do so without personal hardship, and with results that clarify rather than obscure the information in the publication.

The degree to which the practice reflects the special nature (the advantages and/or limits) of teaching through material culture evidence.

This requirement for inclusion reflects a decision on the part of the HAL staff not to admit many fine programs of history teaching. From the staff's first approach to NEH, our primary concern for material culture evidence has been clear. "Artifacts" is the central issue in the project title, and is the link between historians and learners that defines the nature of the project. The staff does not suggest the rejection out of hand of such activities as oral history or historio-drama, but believes that these activities must either be based on, or consciously lead to, the use of material culture evidence to be valuable to this endeavor.

A reasonable distribution and representation of issues, historical content and reader interests.

The HAL staff has always held that the quality of a program or teaching practice as defined in the first three criteria would be the highest priority for inclusion in the publication. It is necessary to acknowledge however that the respect and interest of potential readers will be enhanced by the authors' efforts to represent a balance and breadth of issues and approaches. For example, it would be useful for readers to understand how artifacts can be used as illustrations of history drawn from written sources, and how they can be used as parallel resources to written evidence, as well as to understand their use as primary sources for teaching. It would also be useful to the publication's acceptance if it were to contain examples of teaching about historical epochs that included as many periods of American history as possible. It can further be argued that to reflect the geographic, ethnic and cultural diversity of the United States in the examples chosen for the book is a corollary of the project's thesis that history drawn from material culture sources is a democratic form of history, and that such a representation makes the book a better resource for those who are teaching regional and local history, and the history of minorities. All these factors would be considered, especially when weighing the usefulness of examples that differ more in their representation or an issue or an historic period than in relative quality of endeavor. This is to say for example that the staff should not discard a program merely because it is the fourth in a single state and in its place substitute another program merely because it is the only one located in some other state. But, upon noting the density, the staff should certainly examine its research and question its endorsers to verify the logic of its choice.

In the research done under the planning contract, the staff made use of these criteria insofar as it was able and developed an initial list of examples of promising practices. (Selections from that list appear as applications on the table, page 19; the complete list is part of the HAL final report to NEH.) We discovered that refinements are needed in each of the criterion, and that on-site visitation was the best, sometimes only, way to determine the appropriateness of the practice to the project's thesis.

Fourth, the HAL staff recommends collecting interviews and biographical materials from leaders in the use of material culture. Such information would point up the professional issues to which many of the guiding theoretical statements responded and is a necessary corollary to using those theories wisely. Those pieces would provide a history of professional development for which there are many precedents. The staff acknowledges its debt on this point to the editors of The Art Museum as Educator who published interviews with Katherine Kuh and John Kinard, among others, to Museum News which has developed a series of articles on pioneers in museum practice like John Cotton Dana, and to John Garrity's book, Conversations with Historians.

Fifth, it is recommended that the colloquia approach for gathering information and fostering professional conversations be continued. It was agreed at the colloquium in Williamsburg that there was much merit in bringing together academicians, scholars and museum professionals to examine using material culture in the teaching of history from their different viewpoints and in light of their differing needs and priorities. Many of the participants had not previously been exposed to these differing views, and felt themselves intellectually stretching and growing as a result of the discussion.

Sixth, the above recommendations should be carried out under an institutional umbrella to facilitate further funding, to add a measure of stability to the project, to heighten the project's visibility, and to demonstrate professional responsibility for the pursuit of these issues.

Seventh, professional organizations of people in museums and the academy should assume responsibility for continuing the discussions about teaching history from material culture evidence as a part of their professional development programs. These discussions might take the form of a special seminar series like the AAM's"Learning Theories Seminars" or"Lifelong Learning in the Humanities," or forums at professional meetings.

Susan K. Nichols
Barbara C. Fertig
Thomas J. Schlereth

The Course File:
Syllabi & Bibliography

A suggestion came from an academician that, in the course of the HAL project, we collect copies of college-level syllabi that reflected ways in which history teaching using material culture was being carried on throughout the United States. Many of us collect syllabi of instructors whose work we respect or of courses that sound appealing and are related to our own work. We hope that our selected list will spark an interest in an active and formal collecting and sharing of appropriate syllabi at all levels of instruction, something like a "syllabus bank." As with much of The Working Papers, this simple listing can provide the beginning.

However, rather than merely providing a copy of a course description, we recommend that each instructor place the syllabus in a written context. A simple reprint of a syllabus would not be as helpful to the reader as a descriptive narrative outline which could relate the history of the course itself, could provide justification for components or sequence, could suggest tips for successful adaptation and caveats for possible slip-ups, as well as helping to assure appropriate attribution to the instructor.

SYLLABI

Carleton College, Northfield MN. American Studies 15. "American Culture in Transition, 1880-1910, Introduction to American Studies," Clifford Clark, Professor of History.

Eastern Michigan University, Ypsilanti MI and The Edison Institute, Dearborn MI. Geo 681. "Material Culture, An Introduction," Steven Hamp, Special Programs Coordinator; John Wright, Director of Education Programs; Peter Cousins, Curator of Agricultural Collections.

East Tennessee State University, Jonesboro TN. History 2010."American History Survey," (with Artifacts Festival), Mary Johnson, Instructor.

George Washington University, Washington DC. Ed 721.1 and .2. "Interpretation in the Historic House Museum," Carol B. Stapp, Research Instructor.

Old Sturbridge Village and Boston University, Sturbridge MA. AM 250. "American Material Culture," Jane C. Nylander, Curator of Textiles and Ceramics, Old Sturbridge Village and Adjunct Associate Professor, Boston University.

Sangamon State University and Clayville Rural Life Center and Museum, Springfield IL. ENP 470. "Mornings at Clayville," Edward Hawes, Professor of Environmental Programs and Director of Clayville; Kay McLean and Liz Weir, Educators, Clayville.

Stanford University, Stanford CA. Art 232. "Visual Sources as Historical Documents," Wanda M. Corn, Professor of Art; Joseph J. Corn, Professor in Program in Values, Technology and Society.

University of Missouri, Kansas City MO. History 393/593. "Museum Science," Edeen Martin, Associate Director for Programs. Mid-America Arts Alliance; Linna Funk Place, Museum Project Consultant.

University of Notre Dame, Notre Dame IN. American Studies 480. "American Architecture: The Home as Fact and Symbol," Thomas J. Schlereth, Professor of History.

University of Notre Dame, Notre Dame IN. American Studies 484. "American Material Culture: The History of the Land," Thomas J. Schlereth, Professor of History.

University of Texas, Austin TX. ANT 394. "Folk Art," John Michael Vlach, Professor of Anthropology.

* * * *

Each of the three team members brought to the HAL project a personal bibliography of relevant books and articles. To that core were added the recommendations of museum and academy professionals with whom we met in the course of the project. In addition, we searched a decade of journals for pertinent articles. The results of that culling and those suggestions from us and our colleagues comprise the Selected Bibliography.

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